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LISA LENA

L I S A L E N A

BY

EDWARD JENKINS

AUTHOR OF "GINX'S BABY" "JOBSON'S ENEMIES" ETC

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL II

LONDON

SAMPSON LOW MARSTON SEARLE & RIVINGTON

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LISA LENA

CHAPTER I

RE-CHRISTENED

THE company into which I was introduced was a strange and a mixed one. From Heenan, with his great form and manly ways, down to the hump-backed dwarf Beckman, who performed some foolish tricks with big drums, through all the crowd of riding-masters, jockeys, clowns, scene-shifters, stable-men, of girls—some married, some unmarried—costume-makers, and so forth—the variety of character was remarkable enough.

Indeed, it was a little world with all the passions, hopes, doubts, temptations, slanders, bickerings, friendships and hatreds of the greater world without.

When the women, who occupied the great van to which we had been assigned, woke up they were surprised to find two strange guests among them.

The first to notice us was Miss Alma Viva, a Cockney lady of about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age—a very good horsewoman, getting, however, rather too plump for light feats, and, as she now appeared, in the early morning, anything but a fairy. When we had seen her before in her short gauze petticoats and tights, her brilliant bronze or satin slippers, and her long hair braided under a handsome spangled turban, with a fine red colour in her cheeks, we had thought her quite a bewitching creature, and so

had many a man who watched her graceful and daring antics. This morning she woke up wrapt in a frowsy old dress, in which she had slept, with a dirty face, dishevelled hair, her nails lined with black dirt, and a haggard and wild look about her eyes. The dawn was already breaking, when yawning, with an oath, she threw off her coverlets and sprang to her feet.

I shuddered. I had never heard a woman swear before, and the effect on me was shocking. Why it should be more so in the case of one sex than another I don't know, unless that it is more rare. However, Miss Alma Viva, born Mary Jones, was strongly given to the practice, and for the reader's benefit I shall report her words without the objectionable epithets.

"Tosta! Ella! Sally!" she cried out.
"Git hup—we're hoff."

She began twisting her rough hair in her fingers, and stepped over one of her friends to the door.

I couldn't help laughing at the Cockney aspirate which used to amuse me so much in Mr. Shafto.

The laugh caught her ear, and she espied us two girls in the corner.

"Hello! what are you two gals doin' 'ere. Hey!—Wot har you laughin' hat, himperence?"

"We've joined the company," I replied, rising and standing opposite her. "I was laughing because you speak so funnily with your h's."

"Wot bisness his it of *yours*, miss, wot I does with my haitches? Hi'll scratch yer eyes hout hif you gives me hany of your himpudence. 'Joined the company!' to be sure. Ho dear! and two *sich* minxes has you a makin' fun hov the first

lady hov the company! My goodness! Hi'll make it warm enough for you, hif you hain't more civil. W'ere did you learn yer manners, hey?"

She spoke at the top of her voice, which was a peculiarly harsh and disagreeable one, spoiled by bad whisky, and exposure.

"Hallo!" cried a much sweeter, though deeper voice from the other corner, as a figure rose in the uncertain light and yawned aloud and stretched its arms, "there's Mary Jones beginnin' already. We don't want any bell to wake us so long as she's there."

"Well, Ma-damoselle Trentina," said Miss Jones, turning upon her, and speaking with as much dignity as she could assume. "Hif I ham a *belle* hit's more than hever you was, since you was a woman." She said this with her lip curling and her nose turning up.

“Oh my! you mean that for a joke, I suppose,” cried the other, laughing pleasantly. “I never said I was either a *belle* or a *bo*!”

“Mind your own business,” retorted Miss Jones. “’Ere’s a nice thing. They’ve been hand put two strange gals hin ’ere, and precious brasen young ’ussies they har. Drat ’em, ’ere’s one jist chaffed me habout my haitches, wich his has good haitches has their’s hany day hof the week.”

The succession of *haspirates* so overcame us that both Lily and I made the large van ring again with our laughter. This was soon changed to another tune, for Miss Alma Viva slapped my face with a force that left the mark of her fingers on my healthy cheek for some hours. I was but a girl, so I howled out bitterly. The infuriated woman would have re-

peated the dose had not the person in the corner risen and stepped between us. She was a magnificent woman, tall, powerful, finely formed, with a light complexion, blue eyes, and black hair—the finest woman of the troupe, physically. She used to play as an athlete with dumb bells and Indian clubs. Her real name was Sally Bendigo, and she was a descendant of a celebrated pugilist. She pushed back Miss Jones against the side of the van with a sweep of the arm.

“You’re a beast!” was her candid remark to Alma Viva.—“Poor little thing! did she hurt you much?”

At this moment a deep stern voice was heard outside.

“Now then, you women, are you quarrelling in there? Is that mad Mary at it again?”

It was the voice of Mr. Lane.

“Yes! She’s been and hit one of these little gals,” replied Trentina.

“What are they doing here?”

“I’ll let her know what they’re doing there,” he replied. “Look after them, Miss Trentina, and I’ll settle with Miss Jones during the day.”

By this time the two other women had got up. One was a fragile little girl of sixteen who used to do light work in the ring, leaping through hoops, turning summersaults, and that sort of thing. She had fair hair and a pale face. She was an American. Most of the people employed in the troupe were English, England at that time producing the greater number of acrobats and jockeys and riders, but since then some of the best gymnasts and ring-performers in the world have been native-born Americans. This girl, *née* Jackson, performed under

the name of Compostella. She was so thin and delicate and yet so agile that she admirably suited the character of a fairy, in which she sometimes played.

But the next person was a very important one—Madame Tosta—a stout, red-faced woman, who was called the “costumer,” and who had charge of Mr. Lane’s extensive theatrical wardrobe. A whole van was dedicated to this serious service. It was carefully fitted up; everything was nicely arranged and packed in the smallest space; and it was wonderful what effects Madame Tosta and her two sewing girls could produce out of that motley wardrobe. As a rule she was very good-natured, but she could be very tart if she pleased. The “young ladies” treated her rather superciliously as a rule, but they dared not go too far. She could always have her revenge. It

is a peculiarity of artistes, at all events in our line, that they have fancies for particular dresses on particular nights. It is impossible to explain why, but it is a fact that if a girl does not get the costume she has set her heart on she is likely to make a bad performance. Now, as Madame Tosta could always manage that a costume should be ready or unready, it may easily be imagined that the regular performers did not like to fall out with her.

She looked curiously at us two girls, eyeing us all over. I had ceased crying, being heartily ashamed of myself, and I thanked Miss Trentina for her intervention. Miss Jones was sulkily doing up her hair in the back of the van.

“What line are you in?” inquired Madame Tosta.

“Trapeze,” I replied.

She turned me round, and measured my shoulders and waist with her hand.

“You’ll dress well,” she said.

“Where did you come from?” demanded Trentina, who had been looking us over with her great blue eyes. She too was twisting her hair up, and had a hair-pin in her mouth.

I told a short story, and by this time a voice from outside notified us that the horses were being put in. In a few minutes we were moving off: the women looking out of the door to watch the familiar but exciting incidents of the start, while we girls, afraid lest we should be seen by some one who knew us, kept back in the corner perfectly quiet, until we had got some miles from town, when we jumped up and capered round the van to the astonishment and amusement of our companions, with whom by that

time we had succeeded in establishing more agreeable relations.

There is not much to relate about our journey to New Orleans. We embarked—people, vans, horses, animals, and baggage—on one of the great Mississippi steamers. Here Lily and I began to make the acquaintance of some of the men of our troupe. There was, of course, a certain amount of familiarity in the relations of the various members of the company, but still one found even there the vulgarians and the exclusives. Miss Alma Viva, in the view of the other young ladies, “made herself too cheap,” which was attributable to her Cockney education and origin, as the daughter of a washer-woman in the Minories.

Heenan, Lane, and one or two others, particularly Salvolio, the great ring-master, a half-Italian, who had a large head,

a magnificent black moustache, a big Roman nose, and an imposing appearance, had very little to say to the ladies of the troupe. Salvolio was married. His wife was a Cuban of dark complexion, thick ruddy lips, and curly hair, a good *danseuse*, and a fine, daring rider. She went by the name of Mademoiselle Celestine, and she too kept herself rather select.

I need not mention all the young men of the company, who, having nothing to do on the boat but drink and smoke or talk to somebody, were good enough to present themselves to our acquaintance. The two principal clowns were young men, brothers, who came from London and had a regular London accent, though they were not by any means so Cockney as Miss Jones. Their names, really, were Ben and Tom Toddles, but they ap-

peared simply as "Ben and Tom, the celebrated clowns." They were clever, active young fellows, one hardly of age, the other some two years older, and full of fun and wickedness. They had been trained under one of the most celebrated English clowns, and were famous for their ingenuity in concocting jokes *àpropos* of local events. These two gentlemen, with their short-clipped hair, shaven faces, and strong-built figures, were not disliked in the company, though sometimes inclined to be rather rough, and already beginning to "like more drink than was good for them"—as people put it.

They and other "gentlemen" began to pay to Lily, who was certainly a pretty girl, and to myself a good deal of attention. We were fresh and simple, and laughed at their jokes, and on the whole were very well liked.

Big Heenan for the first day had lounged about the deck in a great, loose white flannel suit, with his enormous neck bare, and a wide straw hat protecting him from the sun. He always noticed us kindly, and once when we were alone spoke to us, asking "how we were getting on with the women-folks," and so forth. By the evening we were walking up and down with the two Toddles, and one or two other light young men, but Madame Tosta came and joined us and we retired early. Next day I noticed that Heenan, as we went about in various parts of the enormous steamer, seemed to be everywhere. We had by this time become pretty familiar with our friends, and as night came on I and Lily were asked by two of the gentlemen to walk the deck in their company. The moon was up, the steamer

glided swiftly down the broad river, and we laughed and listened to the jokes of our friends until it grew late. All the women had retired to bed. But still the youths stayed, and we were so delighted with our freedom that we stayed too. Suddenly Heenan appeared, the light upper deck creaking under his huge weight as he came along.

“Look here, you two young ladies,” he said. “This ain’t a time for you to be out and about the deck mooning with young springulls. You go in right away to your beds, d’ye hear, and take my advice and don’t be too familiar with the sort of chaps you’ll find around in this troop. They’re mere *shucks* most of them. And look’ee here, you two young gentlemen, you leave these ladies alone, d’ye hear? They’re respectable girls, and not of your sort. If I catch you up to

any tricks with them, I'll throw you overboard."

We ran away, rather angry with Heenan, but next morning he took us, and earnestly begged us to keep as much as possible with the women, and out of the way of the young men, whom he described to us as "a lot o' trash."

The interest this rough, big bruiser took in us I have never forgotten. There was a strange gentleness and tenderness in him which showed that within the huge muscular frame there beat a kindly heart.

As soon as we arrived at New Orleans we were put into training with one of the most accomplished gymnasts in the troupe, an elderly man, not up to much more than some feats in the ring, but an admirable teacher. He cut us pretty hard with his tongue sometimes, but he was not cruel. I have seen other men

knock their children about fearfully ; but Timothy Barkey always behaved to me like a gentleman. With our natural aptitude and daring he soon made us tolerably expert performers, and the manager began to think the time had arrived for bringing us out. As he put it, "he didn't care to have capital lying around idle, and we'd been dawdling along and milking the cow for nothing long enough."

He had behaved very well, especially to me; for finding I showed superior aptitude for the trapeze, and was likely to be attractive, he advanced me money to dress myself somewhat more in the style of the "ladies" of the company than I had previously assumed. In fact, I went into long dresses, and pretty loud at that.

A set of tackle had been specially made to suit my weight, and I had tested it. I could now do nearly every one of Zaza's

tricks, besides some of my own. I shall never forget the excitement and the pleasing terror with which I looked forward to my *début*. It was my real start in life—my launch, and I could not help pondering over the vicissitudes of the past and longing and dreaming about the time and the chances to come. The young men of the company were beginning to spoil me by flattery, and the association of the women, especially the irrepressible Alma Viva, was not beneficial.

Madame Tosta superintended the preparation of the costume in which I was to appear. She judged that as my hair was a fine black, and my colour good, I would look well in a bodice of blue with spangled short skirt of tulle and silk, blue silk tights, and satin boots of a darker blue colour. This costume gave rise to intense heart-burnings and bicker-

ings. Celestine came to see it, and at once declared to her husband that "if Mr. Lane was going to give that miserable little child—picked off the street—that magnificent costume, and leave her to perform in old threadbare, second-hand Jew clothes, he was mistaken," and she struck. Her husband, ordinarily a good-natured, reasonable sort of fellow—though he afterwards turned out to be a great rascal—being quite a henchman of the manager's, did his best to bring her to see that the cases were different, that I was a new hand, going in for a "star" engagement, etc., but he might as well have talked to the stars themselves. Alma Viva too got up quite a scene on half a bottle of whisky or so, one night after the performance, and Mr. Lane had to carry her off to her hotel and lock her up. A compromise was effected with

Celestine, and now the time for "my first appearance" was come. For a fortnight before this great event, the walls of "Cottonopolis" had been placarded with this announcement—

LANE'S COMBINED CO-OPERATIVE
CIRCUS.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE GREAT,
UNEQUALLED, UNIQUE, AND UNPARALLELED
FLYING TRAPEZIST AND AIR PERFORMER

L I S A L E N A!!!

"THE BEAUTIFUL MAID OF THE AIR."

How had I come to adopt this grand name?

The episode was a comic one, and worth relating.

As soon as Mr. Lucius Brutus Lane—whose real name by godfather and godmother (if he ever had any) was simple

“Peter,” but he had deemed it necessary to improve upon their taste for public purposes—had arrived at the conclusion that I was “worth his money,” a conference of the leading people of the company was informally held in a whisky bar, to decide under what name I should appear. In that line of business I can assure the reader it is a very serious matter to select a clever *sobriquet*. It is a great thing to strike the public imagination with names like Leona, Lala, Lulu, Zaza, Zazel, Leotardo, a hundred others of that sort. There is a gentleman who can undo himself by dislocating every bone of his body, who performs under the princely and romantic name of Saddi Jalma. He was born of poor parents in Philadelphia. The real name may be Smith, Jones, or Robinson, and the persons may have come from a coster-

monger's cart or a matchmaker's room, but these names convey a notion of foreign origin and a romantic turn of mind on the part of one's parents, who are supposed to have foreseen what a marvel they had produced, and to have dubbed it accordingly by a splendid and attractive name.

Mr. Lane, Mr. Charlemagne Bunny, Mr. Heenan (who would not adopt any "furrin" nomenclature), and Signor Salvio, sat one night as a sort of commission in the bar at the Washington Hotel to decide under what title Lily Edge and I were to be ushered into public life. We two girls were called in to be examined as witnesses, and to assist these gentlemen's minds in settling a point so critical.

Lily came first. She was not to do the lofty tricks, but some minor ones

with me on a low bar. They already looked to me to do the most brilliant part of the performances.

“Now,” said Mr. Lane, “your name is Lily Edge. What does Lily stand for?”

“Lilian, I reckon,” she replied.

“Well, there ain’t much difficulty on that point; the Eye-talian of that will be Liliano, eh! Signor Salvolio?”

Salvolio looked deep into his Monongahela, and, pulling his moustache with a grand air, remarked—

“She’s a female—Liliana.”

“Oh! all right, that’ll do splendidly—the Leaping Liliana. We can’t do anything whatever with ‘Edge,’ I guess—not so far as I see.”

“Hum!” remarked Bunny, removing his pipe to emit a cloud of smoke, “Edge is sharp, eh?—can’t you call her Sharpo?”

Lane shook his head.

“Ain’t classic enough,” he remarked.

“Guess we’ll leave her where she is——
Gentlemen, what do you say?”

Heenan laughed, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and grunted.

“Well,” he said, “you’ve baptized that one, now what will yer christen the other?”

He smiled at me.

“What do you call yourself?” he said.

“Elizabeth Bellamy.”

All the men remained silent, frowned, and went into deep thought. This was evidently a tough problem.

“Elizabeth ain’t a good name for an artiste,” said Mr. Lane, “no ways. It’s long, it’s common, it ain’t pretty.”

“Well,” I said, “they call me ‘Lisa’ for short.”

“Ah!”

All the gentlemen drank and looked at each other. Heenan nodded approvingly. They decided on that to begin with. But they agreed they must have a second. Lisa, in itself, was not enough. "Bellamy? What are we to do with that, Salvolio?"

"Bell—Bella—Lisa Bella. No, that won't do; too many Bellas about already. Bellamia? Don't like it."

"Try Lamia," suggested Bunny.

"No. Lame-ya! that don't sound like a gal that can jump like a kangaroo."

All sorts of names were discussed, Heenan remaining silent, no one hitting on anything satisfactory.

Heenan had been making marks on the table with his big finger and some spilt whisky. At length he spoke.

"Look'ee here, Lane," he said. "Your name's L—a—n—e, ain't it?"

“ Yes.”

“ Well, jest stick the E where the A is, and the A where the E is. What does that make ? ”

“ L—e—n—a. Lena! By Jove! splendid. Lisa Lena! Sounds quite furrin. Pure Eye-talian. Well, Miss Bellamy, how will that suit you ? ”

“ First-rate, Mr. Lane.”

“ Then, you’re christened LISA LENA, and your *debew* will be this day fortnight. Whew! Boy there—cocktails all round ! ”

CHAPTER II

A SWING FOR LIFE

My *début* was considered a success. I may say, without danger of being misunderstood, that this was due less to my performances than to my appearance. I have before me now a photograph of myself as I first came out. It is that of a slim and graceful girl, with unbound hair falling down below the waist, an agreeable oval face, regular features, a fine bust, an elegant figure, which my costume was of course specially designed to show off. Any one now seeing my full, fat face and form would hardly

believe that I had been the fairylike-looking person represented in the picture.

As a woman writing for women, and writing now after the romance of life has passed away, perhaps I may be permitted to say a word here. It is one of the evils and the snares of the profession I had chosen that it appeals and panders to a vicious taste in the public and a depraving pride in the performer. In ordinary theatrical exhibitions, a woman may depend to some extent on the taste and splendour of her dress or the fineness of her figure, but it is dress which is decent, and her main reliance is upon her histrionic abilities. But, beyond doubt, I confess it—and every girl would confess it who had been employed in such performances—the ballet, the trapeze, and many other gymnastic exhibitions, promote a desire in the mind and on the

part of the performer to show off the figure as much as possible, and, as it were, to accentuate advantages of form and outline. I can hardly venture to speak of the demoralizing effect upon a woman's mind of such sensuous conceit. Possibly many mothers who have encouraged their daughters of late years to adopt the fashionable *mode* may not have apprehended the evil influence exerted upon pure-minded girls by dressmakers who have pointed out to them the statuesque advantages of their figures, and induced them to submit to have their dresses made in such a manner as to show off these advantages to the utmost. A girl who has once had such ideas put into her head has already begun to lose her natural modesty. The women who consent to allow themselves to be dressed in chamois-leather underclothes, in order

to set off and expose their figures, can hardly be far removed from the girls who display themselves in silk tights and provoking décolletés costumes to mixed audiences of men and women.

I had little idea, when I first swung myself aloft in Lane's Circus at New Orleans, of what I was bringing upon myself. It was a wild delight to hear the applause, to look round on the excited multitude, to please and frighten them alternately by my daring and graceful tricks. But I had hardly awakened in the morning the next day after my *début* before a negro came to the hotel where we all put up, and presented me with a magnificent bouquet of flowers, "with the compliments of Mr. Wrigby Lorillard." Next came a black page with a second bouquet, even more magnificent than the former, from Mr. Louis Leblanc.

I asked Madame Tosta what I was to do.

“You can do as you please,” she said, looking at me very steadily; “but if you ask my advice, I would throw the flowers out of the window, and when the gentlemen call, as they are sure to do, just say that you ain’t at home.”

Something persuaded me the old woman was right, and being rather an impulsive girl, I forthwith pitched the two big bouquets out of the window. They fell into a crowded street, to the great astonishment of the passers-by; and as ill luck would have it, Mr. Lorillard himself, who, dressed in a handsome French surtout, with a flower in his button-hole, a fine shiny hat, and lavender inexpressibles and gloves, was coming to call upon me, received his own bouquet and that of his rival dead on his

hat. He recognized his own flowers, and believing that I had done it on purpose, went off in a great rage to complain to Mr. Lane.

Now, I must tell you the truth about Mr. Lane. He was a very kind-hearted fellow in his way, but with him business was first and morality afterwards. Mr. Lorillard belonged to one of the "first families" in New Orleans, and was one of the best patrons of the circus and the stage of that city. Mr. Lane was excessively annoyed that I, a young *débütante*, should have insulted and repelled this gentleman. He was afraid it would injure his circus among the fashionable young men of New Orleans. So he sent for me and told me I had no right to be so squeamish; that if I took to that profession I must take all its consequences; that young men would be at-

tentive to me, that he made no suggestions but I should at least be polite to them, etc., etc. Mr. Lane was bad enough; later on I was to learn that if an attractive young lady did not choose to be amiable to any wretch who chose to pay her attention, a Berlin or a Viennese manager would give her notice that he could not renew her engagement.

That evening, my second evening, I was hissed by a number of negroes in the gallery. They had, I believe, been hired by Mr. Lorillard, who took this manly way of getting his revenge. However, my performance was so much better than the first that a crowded audience enthusiastically applauded me and drowned the hisses with their cheers.

After the performance Heenan came to me.

“Bully for you, little gal!” he said. “You done quite right. Don’t you let them young aristo’s come around makin’ love to you. Remember, every woman is valued at her own valuation, and a woman that can be bought with a bouquet or a bracelet ain’t worth a straw, that’s my idee. Don’t listen to Lane, he’s a cussed money-makin’ Jew. He’d sell his mother’s coffin for a greenback dollar; he don’t care a darn for anythin’ but his show. Keep on the way you’re goin’, little ’un, and you’ll do yet; and if Lane gives you any impertinence you come to me and I’ll break every bone in his body.”

The good-natured athlete did not see that this threat of his was anything but an inducement to a timid girl to call for his help. However, I took his advice. It got about among Mr. Lorillard’s friends that I had refused his attentions, and

although I received from men, asking to make my acquaintance, a few notes, which I threw into the fire, I was left alone by the gentlemen, while the general public crowded to see my performances.

I have lifted the veil very delicately and carefully; but enough to enable the reader to see on what a life I had embarked; and yet I do not wish it to be understood that it is of necessity a life of evil. I have seen married women who performed with their husbands, as well as many children who performed with their parents, who passed as unscathed through the temptations of this stage life as any girls in the less public life without. I know a really beautiful girl, a Frenchwoman, who rides in a celebrated circus on the Continent. She is known from Hamburg to Vienna, from Paris or Madrid to St. Petersburg. She

is never at a performance without her father and mother. Princes and counts and barons and rich millionaires, Jews, Russians, Hungarians, English, all the lazy, lounging, wicked fashionable *roués* of the capitals, send her bouquets, write her *billets-doux*, pester her with their ogling and bowing. But to-day she is as fresh and childlike as ever. At nights, when her performance is over, she retires quietly with her parents to an honest home and a virtuous couch. The devil does not always have his own way even in so favourite a field as that of public amusements.

For my part, I was disposed to take Heenan's advice, and did so.

But a new danger threatened me from a nearer and more unexpected quarter. I had been performing for a fortnight, and my success and probably also my

invariable good temper and quiet behaviour had created a favourable impression among the leading ladies of our troupe. Madame Celestine, the wife of the ring-master, was pleased to be condescending. She invited me occasionally to join her husband and herself at the supper which invariably follows the *artiste's* evening. Lily, or Liliana, had not proved a great success—she had also rather taken to a wilder class of people than I cared about, and our friendship had to some extent cooled down. She eventually married one of the jockeys, and together they contrived to get along very well. They had a considerable family, every one of whom was trained for the profession. I know of a case in which one mother had nineteen children, all of them tumblers, gymnasts, and performers on the rope.

Celestine chose to find in me something superior which commended me to her good opinion. She was a fiery little woman, her warm tropical blood seemed to rush instead of to run in her veins, and though Signor Salvolio was very kind to her, she used sometimes to make life pretty rough for him. They had no children, and that I have noticed often makes married people ill-natured.

Signor Salvolio was such a big man, and altogether so imposing and grand in his manners, his mode of speech, etc., that I was almost afraid of him—at all events I held him in very high respect.

He always came forward when I ran out of the *coulisses*, and gave me his hand to lead me to the front. On such occasions his immense chest, his tightened girth, his great shirt-front and black neckcloth, his white gloves, his glossy

black hair and curled moustachios, his patent-leather boots, made such a magnificent *ensemble* that I used to feel quite grand. He would lead me to the rope, hold out his hand to receive my foot, and then give the signal to the men to hoist away.

One evening I suddenly became conscious that Signor Salvolio held my hand very tight, and that he was trembling. He gave my foot with its satin boot a distinct squeeze. I thought he had been taking too much wine, but when I came down he seized my hand again, and congratulated me so warmly that I was quite ashamed. I took no notice of this conduct, but the next night it was more marked I flushed up with anger, and was so put out that I nearly missed one of my tricks, and was within an ace of concluding my artistic career.

The next day I had been practising in the circus with Ben Toddles, one of the clowns, who had undertaken to give me some lessons, and after the practice was over was going for a walk, when whom should I find awaiting me after I came from the dressing-room but Signor Salvolio, dressed up in an elegant morning costume, with a flower in his button-hole, and a pretty little bouquet in his hand. He shook hands before I could lift a finger.

“ See,” he said, with an elaborate bow, “ these are for you, Lisa.”

“ What ! ” I replied. “ Did Madame Celestine send them ? How good of her ! ”

“ No,” he said, with his hand on his heart, “ they are the offer of my homage to you.”

“ Homage ! Signor Salvolio, I don't

know what you mean. It is very kind of you to bring me flowers, but why don't you give them to madame?"

"Oh! she gets plenty," he said. "And I want you to understand I am your friend."

"I always thought you were," I replied, accepting the flowers. "Thank you very much."

"Is that all you are going to say?" he cried, disappointed.

I looked at him inquiringly, and could see that his face was flushed and his manner agitated. A strange fear came over me, which I could not explain to myself. By great good luck Madame Celestine herself, who had been walking, came in to look for her husband, as the three o'clock dinner hour was fast approaching. She stared at both of us with her keen black eyes.

“Where did you get those flowers?” she said to me brusquely, fastening her glance on the bouquet.

“Signor Salvolio has just given them to me!” I replied with simplicity.

She snatched them out of my hand.

“*You* giving her flowers!” she screamed to her husband. “*You*, you wicked old vagabond.” And she went on with a tirade as painful as it was energetic, while Salvolio, turning white, shrugged his shoulders and looked at me with a malignant gaze.

“Come away!” she said to me, when she had pumped herself out, and seizing my arm she hurried me into the street.

That night when I went out to my performance Signor Salvolio did not come forward to present me to the audience. It was Ben Toddles in his clown’s dress who held my foot for me

to ascend. But I passed Salvolio in the crowd, and as I went by he hissed in my ears—

“I’ll be even with you yet, you little devil.” His face was white and his features distorted with rage.

From that moment my association with this worthy couple ceased. Celestine never spoke to me—and never saw me without turning up her nose; and the signor behaved as if I were not a member of the company; he never even looked at me.

About ten days after, we gave our last performance at New Orleans. There was an immense crowd. I was to do a new feat taught me by Ben Toddles. I swung up into the air on my rope, reached the trapeze, poised on it a moment, gave a turn and began to swing, when suddenly one of the ropes gave way. A terrible

shriek burst from my lips in spite of me, but it was drowned in the far more awful shriek of the spectators. By God's mercy I had firm hold of the stick, and though my two hands slid, they caught on the noose of the severed rope. It had given way up near the ceiling.

I hung suspended by both hands for a second or two, and then feeling the other rope hanging beneath me I twisted my leg round it and slipped to the ground without injury, amidst frantic shouts of applause and gratification. I was as white as a sheet, and trembling with emotion, but I can now remember that, as I touched the ground, one of the first things I saw was the face of Signor Salvolio, dark and scowling. When I had changed my dress and came out to go home, Ben Toddles was waiting for me.

"Look out, Miss Lisa," he said.

“There’s some one got a spite agen you. *That rope was cut—and it’s ——— queer too, for Signor Salvolio had the trapeze specially examined this morning for safety.*”

I looked at him aghast. It was impossible for me to doubt to whom I owed my accident. This was not the only time that for similar causes I was exposed to a similar danger, of which every trapeze girl and high-rope performer must be prepared to run the risk.

CHAPTER III

A DARK CHAPTER

WHEN we returned to the Eastern States, Mr. Lane's company broke up. He had taken to drink, Salvolio and Celestine to quarrelling, and many others followed the example set by these distinguished persons. Heenan separated in disgust. Lilian, as I have mentioned, married one of the jockeys, and I was left in New York, without an engagement, with some four hundred dollars in cash, a good wardrobe, and two brilliant performing costumes, which I had purchased at the breaking up of the circus company. The

two Toddles, however, who had saved some money, and were helped by other "capitalists," including a Mr. Boganio, "Agent," of New York, of whom more hereafter, bought up Mr. Lane's menagerie, and resolved to start a new exhibition of their own.

I dare say many people wonder where all the money comes from for all the show and theatrical ventures which are started from time to time. In truth, an enormous sum of money is invested in such things, and the greater part of it, I may say, is not remunerative. But there is a gambling element in it which appeals to certain natures. In one case the capital is found by some rich Cræsus, who wishes to have the character of a "patron" of the stage or of sport, or to play the *rôle* of a Don Juan. In another it is the operation of some smart specu-

lator, who thinks he sees a short way to a fortune by exhibiting combinations of pretty faces and well-turned legs. In many cases, however, the business is a "business," carried on by shrewd and experienced men, who know all its ins and outs, the chances of every venture, the secret of economizing money and yet making a great show. Mr. Boganio was one of these men.

To look at him he was as dry and unromantic as a banker. His face was brown, and puckered, and shrewd, his eye keen, his lips thin. He was beginning to lose his hair, but the remains of it were tended with the greatest care. His face was clean shaven. It was impossible to see a more keen and yet inscrutable physiognomy. He was an Italian, a Jew, a Scotchman, and a Yankee all in one.

Mr. Boganio owned a theatre in New York, and another in Baltimore; he "ran" a music-hall in Chicago, which paid magnificently; and had a beer-hall in the Bowery, exerting no very healthy influence, I fear, on the local morals and politics. In fact his ventures, as I afterwards found out, were not all known to the public; and his wealth must have been immense.

He was a small man, about five feet eight, and yet firmly knit, with a good strong chest and arms and legs. He was at home with all the ladies of the ballet, the circus, the tight-rope, the stage, and yet he frequented the Lotus Club, and mixed with many gentlemen on the turf and in the trotting-ring, where he was an authority and an occasional speculator.

I was presented to Boganio by Ben Toddles. The clown had come to me

with an offer to make a "star" engagement with the company. He proposed to teach me more tricks, and also wished me to undertake to exhibit in the cage with Tom the tiger. Mr. Charlemagne Bunny was to remain as menagerie master, but he was evidently afraid of Tom, and Ben Toddles prophetically "guessed that some of these days Tom would eat up the white-livered beggar, body and lights."

Though I was not afraid of Tom, I had my doubts about the infirmities of his temper, and I positively declined to agree to exhibit myself in his cage. So Toddles took me to Boganio, who, as he was finding the money, hoped that his superior tact might bring me round.

Mr. Boganio received us in a little office in Fulton Street, basement, at the back. It was a funny little place. It

had a carpet on the floor, a large shut-up desk, of walnut, a few chairs; the walls were decorated with coloured engravings and photographs of ballet-girls, actresses, performers, etc., and some racing scenes. There was a smell of smoke about this room—or, rather, den. When Mr. Boganio turned round on his whirling chair, there was a lighted cigarette in his fingers. He did not rise. His keen eye ran over my face and figure as I entered with exactly the same cool and critical glance that it would have used to scan the lines and proportions of a favourite on the green, or a trotter in a sulky. At length his eye rested on my face in one long steady stare, as if he were trying to magnetize or to subdue me. I looked at him in return, and as my big black eyes did not blench, he at length removed his glance, and with a smile asked me to sit down.

“Now, Miss Lena,” he said, “I understand you accept this engagement, and I’m bound to say it will be an advantage to the company in point of looks.”

Another long stare, which I returned.

“The only difficulty is about some tiger called Tom. You’re the only person, it seems, who can manage him—which—*puff, puff*—shows his taste. Beauty is like music—eh?—*puff, puff*—has charms to soothe the savage breast—ha! ha! Not surprised he’s fond of *you*. ’Pon my word, shouldn’t like to see you too often—eh?—*puff, puff*—might fall in love, you know—at my age dangerous thing—eh?—*puff, puff*.”

I smiled as artistically as I could at this vulgar address, but I was not then sharp enough to take up Mr. Boganio and give him a Roland for his Oliver.

“Look’ee yere, Mister Boganio,” put

in Toddles senior, who did not seem to relish his capitalist's fun, "I tell you what I think. Let Charley Bunny go on with his performance with Tom inside the cage, but we'll arrange a spectacle for driving round town, a fairy chariot, with Miss Lena as fairy—Unar and the beast, you know—I saw it once at Drury Lane pantomime—a gal that goes round in a white dress leading a big lion, you know—but there, it's all the same between a lion and a tiger, you know—and Miss Lena shall dress up and hold the beast. 'Ow'll that do?"

"Could you do that, Lena?" said Boganio, addressing me familiarly.

"Yes, Mr. Boganio," I said, with an emphasis on the "Mr."

"That will do," he said, nodding to Toddles. "What hotel are you staying at, Miss Lena? I shall have the pleasure of calling on you."

I gave the name of my hotel, while Toddles looked as black as thunder.

When we got out he warned me very solemnly against Mr. Boganio. As that gentleman had made no impression on me, the warning was not of much value. But so touched was Mr. Toddles with the necessity of outwitting that clever old *roué* that he set about doing it at once, and in his own way. As soon as our bargain was signed, he proposed to me to attend a supper which he said he meant to give to several of the ladies and gentlemen of his troupe at a notorious restaurant in the Bowery. Relying on his statement, I went innocently enough. When I arrived no one was there, and Mr. Toddles had ordered supper. It was in a public room, and he assured me the others would come later on. He made himself excessively agreeable. A bottle

of champagne was brought. I was in good spirits. I drank, and gave play to my naturally lively temper. Whether I drank too much—or the wine was drugged—I don't know. I lost my consciousness.

* * * * *

A week afterwards, as the only resource now left to me to preserve character and self-respect, I married Mr. Ben Toddles.

CHAPTER IV

TOM CUTS UP NASTY

THUS I had become plain Mrs. Toddles, though I continued to be known in the acrobatic world as "*Miss Lisa Lena.*" My husband, who, with all his faults, was an energetic and clever fellow, was a sort of henchman of Boganio's. He had indeed been principally employed in Lane's Circus in looking after Mr. Boganio's interests as a mortgagee of that property. His marriage with me, however conformable with "the proprieties," did not please his backer at all. Indeed, the object of my worthy spouse in his ne-

farious plot was in his opinion a highly moral one! namely, to snatch me out of Boganio's hands. Mr. Boganio was too keen not to see this, and he was not a man to be crossed without having his revenge. But he gave Ben and me a splendid supper at Delmonico's. He congratulated Ben and felicitated me in the kindest manner, and he presented me with a bracelet. Ben was delighted.

"The old boy ain't a bit put out," he said to me.

We travelled for two years through the various States of the Union. It would be a very unprofitable retrospect for me to invite the reader to follow our strange and yet somewhat monotonous life. One result of my marriage was that Ben Toddles devoted himself very earnestly to improving me—in his own line of business—he knew nothing else—and that

under his tuition I became a famous expert not only on the trapeze, but in many gymnastic and acrobatic feats.

It had been arranged that I was to appear with Tom, the tiger, in our grand processions. Tom had not lost his liking to me. When he heard my voice he testified his delight, and when I spoke to him in anger he would crouch down at my feet. Therefore, whenever we entered a town, I used to head the procession, dressed in a white robe as Una, and seated in an immense chariot, with Tom, chained strongly, lying at my feet. The car in which we were seated was very gorgeously decorated. On a high box in front sat our best driver, a man with six fingers on each hand, who used to drive twelve cream-coloured horses. Mr. Waddell was rather a timid man, of a portly figure, and was always in great terror of

my favourite, Tom. So extreme was his fear that I had to enter into an engagement with him that if anything happened to Tom, or he should show any signs of ferocity I should give Waddell notice by saying, "Look out, John!"

We were once entering the city of Pittsburg in Pennsylvania, where we expected to make a good haul, and all the resources of the establishment were called out to make our entry into the city as magnificent as possible. I was dressed on that day in a new costume of blue, with gilt spangles, which showed me off, I doubt not, to admiration; but Tom, the tiger, was unused to it, or else was in a bad temper; at all events, I noticed when I mounted the van to take my seat that he was in a very restless and angry condition. John Waddell, who always took a look at him before mounting his

seat, seemed to have some sort of presentiment that Tom did not mean to behave like a Christian and a gentleman.

“He’s kicky to-day, miss,” he said. “Now mind, honour bright, if you see him up to any deviltry you just cry out, ‘Look out, John!’ and I’ll make tracks.”

I always had a gilt baton in my hand, and whenever I held it up Tom used to fawn and crouch at my feet, to the intense admiration of the spectators.

Immense crowds were collected to see us enter the city. We had camped outside the night before our “grand entry,” after arriving from Philadelphia by railroad, and our *cortège* of horses and chariots and vans was enormous. A brass band in a big ornamented van preceded us, and then came my chariot—“MISS LISA LENA AND THE FAMOUS TIGER TOM, DRIVEN BY SIX-

FINGERED JACK, THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD."

I took my seat high up in the chariot, and the tiger, after considerable trouble, was induced to crouch at my feet. I held over him my golden baton in sign of conquest, and one foot was on his neck. He was, however, far from easy. Instead of lying quiet with his chin on his paws, his head was erect and trembling, his eyes were rolling, his tail was moving to and fro. My heart went pit-a-pat, and I watched him narrowly while I pretended to the crowd to be quite unconcerned. We were going along and had reached a point at which Waddell was turning his string of horses in grand style round a corner. The crowd shouted. Suddenly my friend Tom threw up his head with an angry growl, pitched my satin-clad foot off his neck, and jumped up.

“Look out, Tom,” I cried out in my excitement—to the tiger, not to Waddell. But at the words “Look out” the “strongest man in the world,” in mortal terror, pitched himself off the box head foremost on his horses’ backs, while Tom, seeing this, and giving a tremendous leap towards the box, broke his chain. It was so strong that the check pulled him down again for a moment. Quick as lightning I seized the end of the broken chain. He turned on me and growled. I hit him with all my might with my baton. It was only made for show, and broke in two pieces. A shout of terror went up from the crowd—“The tiger is loose!”

I was desperate. I thought nothing of my life. Seizing the brute by the collar, I struck him with all my force with my closed fists, screaming—

“Down, Tom—lie down.”

It was like the famous encounter between Miss Brontë and the mastiff. I dashed my fist repeatedly in his face.

He gave way. He sank down in the bottom of the car, completely cowed, and fawned upon me as I stood there, my hair all down, my dress disarranged, excited but triumphant. The crowd shouted their acclamations. It seemed to be part of a play. In another minute Charley Bunny came along with another chain, and after I had hooked it in the collar, overcome with excitement, I fainted. My hand was black and blue and swelled up to double its size. It was several days before I was able to perform. Nothing would ever induce Waddell again to drive twelve horses with a tiger behind him, so that this feature of our processions was given up.

But I would rather have run the risk of riding with Tom till doomsday than have had anything to do with Mr. Cyril Boganio.

Rough and wild and strange, indeed, was the life we sometimes led. We penetrated the Far West; we crossed the continent and exhibited in San Francisco; we stopped to amuse the Mormons. At one time I was nearly killed in a railway collision. Two trains crossing at the level ran into each other. I was sitting with a Miss Smith—"Marie Etoile"—in the end seat of one of the carriages. The other train cut into the corner of the carriage, killed poor Marie at my side, and left me almost unhurt. We came in contact with the roughest people, and to keep myself from insult I was obliged to buy and carry a revolver.

Once we were travelling on an Ohio

railway, and early in the morning stopped for a few minutes at a small depôt. I don't know what made me get up and look out of the window in the cold grey morning. I saw a straggling town, with a couple of churches, a number of wooden houses, and about a hundred yards from the depôt down the line was a wretched hotel. I stepped out on the platform of the car, and noticed a man walking down the line from the hotel towards the cars. He seemed in a hurry, and after him came straggling a little bunch of men, about half a dozen. The man did not look round, but I fancy he knew the crowd were all following in a stern silence. He had arrived within fifty feet or so of the train, and I caught sight of his face. I shall never forget it. It was white and ghastly. His right hand was in his trousers' pocket. I glanced up the line

at his pursuers. I saw that one and all carried revolvers. They had hastened their steps when within a few paces of him. Still he did not turn round. Suddenly he made a quick step forward as if to run, and the man nearest him instantly fired his revolver. The bullet went in at his back between the shoulder-blades. He stumbled forward, and running up they all discharged their revolvers into his body. Then, coolly wiping the smoking weapons on their coat-sleeves, they silently walked back to the hotel.

The conductor of the cars ran out on the platform and glanced down the line.

“Good God,” I said, “they’ve shot him! What has he done?”

“Oh!” he said, rolling in his cheek a lump of gum he was chewing, “I guess he’s been cheatin’ at poker. Reckon

they've done the job pretty clean—he's gone to kingdom come. *All aboard!*"—and the train started off without any further excitement.

The effect of these scenes and experiences upon my mind I can still, in some degree, estimate. Unquestionably I was roughened and hardened. The sights of which I was obliged at times to be a witness, of brutal quarrelling and vulgar debauch, at length became so familiar that they did not produce a healthy shock either to my nerves or my sights of propriety. While I kept aloof from degrading companionship and low intrigues, my *morale* was consciously lessened. And, unhappily for me, I had a husband to whom the first ideas of religion and morality were unknown, and who, ignorant of anything but his profession, had an intense hatred of know-

ledge. My mind, as I have shown, was not an inactive one; I had at least had some advantages of education, and sought to improve them. Whenever I could, I borrowed or bought books. They were indeed my only solace, except the companionship of poor Tom Toddles, who was a gentler fellow than Ben and took a brotherly interest in me. My husband was annoyed by my superior knowledge, although it was useful to him at times in his accounts and correspondence, and he used to take my books and throw them into the fire, or hide them away from me.

One thing strongly possessed me—the desire to find my mother and my brothers. I inquired for her all through the West, but no trace could be found. As for the boys, they had disappeared. It became a monomania with me to seek out these lost relations. I spent money in adver-

tising ; I took journeys ; my heart yearned for some one who was of my own flesh and blood, who would love me with a pure love and for my own sake : The sort of friendship one had with the women with whom one performed was hardly endurable. My husband had shown me how he regarded me by his first and subsequent treatment of me. His brother showed a sort of dog's affection for me, which I appreciated ; but there was a hunger in my heart I could not satisfy. It was as if a coarse and brutal hand had written some foul legend of monkish times over the fine, fair characters of some purer and nobler composition. I believe such a manuscript is called a palimpsest. It is only with care that the rude stuff above can be cleared away and the effaced characters beneath be restored to sight ; and I

longed for the hand that should come and wipe away the evil and bring up for me once more some of the purer and holier ideals that had so long been hidden beneath. I dreamed of my mother. I lay awake and thought of her. I longed to clasp her in my arms. I wept again and again, when my efforts to find her were unfruitful. I prayed God to bring her back to me or to take me to her, for life with me now had ceased to have ambitions: there seemed to lie before me nothing but an everlasting grind of perilous performance, an artificial excitement and reaction; and, more horrible than all, I was shut out by my profession from all Christian and decent society, and I must seek for my pleasures and amusements in the *coulisses* of theatres and exhibitions, and the resorts of profligacy and debauch. You may think it

a strange, almost absurd thing to say, but it is nevertheless true, that sometimes during that period, which lasted for nearly four years, I have sat upon my bar high up in the air and glanced sorrowfully round on the audience, looking, as I ever looked, for my mother's face, and then I have longed to launch myself off into the air and die, and my heart has cried out in its bitterness—" *Oh that I had wings like a dove! then would I fly away and be at rest.*"

CHAPTER V

MR. BOGANIO COMES OUT OF HIS SHELL

ON our final arrival at New York, the affairs of Mr. Ben Toddles and the Grand Exhibition had to be wound up. There had been heavy losses, which Mr. Boganio charged upon my husband's mismanagement, and he threatened him with a lawsuit. We had little money, no credit; it became necessary for me to take an engagement. I found one with the proprietor of a large saloon in the Bowery. The engagement was at eighty dollars a week.

To my other feats we had lately added

what is called a "sensational" one, of a novel kind. It has been found by experiment that the human jaw will, with proper appliances, sustain an immense weight. By taking into the mouth a tag of leather or india-rubber, and holding it in a peculiar way, so as to throw the strain on the bones of the jaw and not on the teeth, a very heavy pressure may be borne, especially if it is carefully poised. As I hung head downwards with my knees bent over the trapeze—a position, I own, neither consistent with nature or decency—it occurred to Ben Toddles that I might add to the risk and attraction of the performance by holding a heavy body in my mouth. He invented a mouth-piece, and we tried various weights. In Chicago I held up a barrel of beer, in St. Louis a small cannon. Toddles's ingenuity led him to conceive

the design of allowing me to carry him. I held the tag in my mouth attached to a trapeze, from which he hung, and on which he performed several easy feats. This was done at a height of thirty feet from the ground, and created an immense sensation. People rushed to the Bowery to watch with throbbing hearts for the moment, sure to arrive, they thought, when Ben Toddles would prove too much for my pretty mouth, pull my jaws out, and be killed himself.

Since then many others have done similar feats. There is a coloured girl who, hanging head downwards, holds a good-sized cannon in her mouth while it is fired off. A clever friend of mine was performing a similar feat in London, when, the tag being wrongly adjusted, the enormous weight dragged it out of her mouth, pulling all her teeth with it.

The brave little woman never uttered a cry, she turned and dropped gracefully from the trapeze, clapped her hand on her mouth, and bowing to the audience left the scene.

No sooner had this performance become a success than all the *jeunesse dorée* of New York began to frequent the saloon where I was performing. Bouquets were showered on me, and *billets-doux* reached me praying for the favour of an interview, and sometimes containing declarations of the warmest character. My husband was of rather a cynical disposition, and as I hardly ever passed an hour without the presence of himself or his brother, he never took the trouble even to read these communications. Tom and I used to peruse them and laugh over them; and my room looked like a flower market, with bouquets stuck in jugs, tumblers,

decanter, and basin. It is impossible for any actress or performer, whether ugly or pretty, to avoid the penalty of success. These tributes come from no single class. It is not only the rich spendthrift, the *blasé* prince, or lord or count, the man about town, but sometimes staid merchants, wealthy men of business, clever authors, and brilliant diplomatists, who are to be found offering their homage to the talented or handsome artiste. I had to drive to and from my hotel in a hack, and Tom invariably accompanied me to prevent my admirers from mobbing me at the exit from the saloon or at the door of the hotel. We gave strict orders that no cards were to be brought up to me, and no visitors admitted except my lady friends.

There was one of my admirers, however, who excited in us some curiosity. Every

night for two weeks a magnificent bouquet was brought in by a servant, and handed to me on the stage, when I was called out a second time for an ovation with vociferous shouts of applause. There was no name, no *billet-doux*, and the servant vanished as soon as his duty was performed. The flowers were very costly. Naturally, a girl of simple education like mine felt flattered by all this adulation, and the mystery of these bouquets awakened more interest than all the others put together. On the eleventh day, the centre of the bouquet disclosed a small parcel in laced paper. This parcel contained a beautiful diamond bracelet. Tom did not like it, I could see, but Ben when he saw it said, coarsely enough—

“He’s a —— fool, whoever he is, but it’s money. I should keep it.”

“But, shall I wear it?”

“Why not? We shall take care he doesn’t come to see you. You might as well please him as not.”

I feel this must shock my reader, as it now makes me blush with shame to recall it. He or she must remember that it is real life and not romance, human nature as it is, and not as it might or should be, that I am depicting.

The next night I wore the bracelet. We all looked sharply round to see whether any one of the tenants of the boxes exhibited any special interest, but no one gave any sign. The dreary old gentleman who had offered to place a fortune at my disposal sat as usual in a box by himself, with a bouquet ready to throw down on the stage,—his trembling hand holding up a big pair of glasses. The enthusiastic group of young bloods from Delmonico’s were in the best box

with a heap of flowers to be showered down upon me. The pale-faced editor of the *New York Trumpet* sat at a table as close to the stage as he could get and watched my every movement, but clearly he was not a man to spend thirty or forty dollars a day in flowers. We were all mystified.

We were staying at the Union Hotel in ——— Street, much frequented by artistes, and kept in European style. In America, "European style" means, except at the celebrated Brevoort House, bad accommodation and high charges. I may be forgiven a hasty sketch of the coffee-room of the Union Hotel. It was an amusing scene to an observant person.

From one to four o'clock in the middle of the day, or about the same hours in the night, the room would be filled with a crowd noisily conversing in a bewilder-

ing polyglot. There would be seen the little thin French ballet-master of the Bowery Theatre sitting at table with the "star," Gertie, she in slip-shod slippers with high heels, dirty stockings running down in crumples over her instep, a frowsy head of hair, surmounted by an old French hat, talking in a harsh, disagreeable voice that sounded like that of a peacock with a cold. There were Herr Muff, the big third-class German baritone, and Coblenski, the Polish violinist, a tall, shrivelled man, in a shabby suit, his long black hair growing as it were off his high, narrow forehead and down over his shoulders, discussing with Monsieur Grigot, a French violoncellist, the score of one of Strauss' new waltzes, and every now and then breaking out with snatches of the air. There would be the two Gonella brothers, a fine young man with

a boy, who did together some very clever and surprising feats: Americans and fine fellows too, always well dressed, intelligent, and ever keeping up a high character. In the corner would tower the vast form of Chang, a Chinese giant, trying to make a meal out of American cooking. Near by, at a round table, you might see a lot of brown-faced, dark-haired fellows, eating and gesticulating with amazing liveliness, though not with much noise, a band of the Tzigane or Gipsy players from Hungary, whose strange wild music stirs the heart with a melancholy rapture. There also would be the Tyrolese singers, a father and mother, two girls and two youths, a quiet, respectable family, who earned an honest living. And there was Mr. Ratten with his four children, all Cockney to the back-bone, who came out on the stage

in pretty costumes and played tunes on silver trumpets. There were bell-ringers, tumbler-players, drummers, the “musical Cooks,” who performed airs like the *Carneval de Venise* on dinner-plates, copper-pans, and metal spoons—and Mr. Ticteczek the Hungarian gentleman who swallowed a knife or a bottle and sang a comic song with these inconveniences down his throat—or somewhere else about him; a strange medley, representatives of histrionic and musical and acrobatic arts—the men and women who undertook to make people laugh and forget their cares in that excitation which is called “amusement.”

At the hotel, then, one day, sitting in my room on the third floor, in a gay dishabille, for I had a fancy for dress, the waiter came to announce a lady. Supposing it was some artiste friend, I

told him to show her in, and a tall person entered, dressed in a handsome costume, with a hat, and a black "fall" down over her face, showing nothing but a delicate white chin, well-turned. She bowed, I thought, a little awkwardly. I rose and returned the courtesy, seeing at once it was a stranger. The waiter had instantly left the room. Both Ben and Tom had gone away early that morning to Hoboken, where they had received the offer of an engagement.

"I beg pardon," I said, "I think there is some mistake."

"Oh no!" exclaimed the lady, laughing, and speaking in a deep voice which startled me. "There is no mistake whatever—ha! ha! Miss Lisa Lena, how do you do?"

The veil was lifted, and I saw before me a face I instantly recognized as that

of a young gentleman, a constant frequenter of the best box, a handsome fellow with a face as smooth as a baby's.

"What are you doing here, sir?" I exclaimed in terror. "Go away, for Heaven's sake! If Mr. Toddles knows this you will be killed."

"I'll run the risk of that," cried Mr. Vanderteufel, a scion of one of the oldest families in New York. "I made a bet of a thousand dollars I would see you in your own room, and I've won it. There it is for you," and he threw a bundle of bills on the table. "How do I look in my sister's clothes, eh?" he said, strutting up and down the room and swinging the train about in a very clever and amusing manner. Angry as I felt, I could not help laughing at the boy, for boy he was.

"You look like a fool, sir!" I at length said. "Here, take your money

and go away. It is an insult to come into a lady's room without leave."

"H'm," he retorted, saucily. "I have never been told so before."

"Well, sir, please to take the bills away—I won't take them—I can do nothing with them. May I ask are you the gentleman who has sent me the bouquets and the bracelet?"

"Bouquets?—yes. There is one of mine I see in that big jug. But I never sent you a bracelet—is there some one else in the field?"

"There is no one in the field, sir; and now I must ask you to get off the field as soon as you can," and I touched the button of the electric bell to summon the waiter.

"Don't trouble about that," he said, advancing towards me. "The bell won't be answered."

“ Won’t be answered ? ” I cried, jumping behind the table. “ It doesn’t matter, sir, I can protect myself ; I’m a Southern girl ; ” and I whipped a silver-plated revolver out of my pocket and pointed it at him.

“ Good God ! ” he cried, turning deadly pale. “ Don’t shoot ! ”

“ I will if you don’t walk out *instantly*, ” I cried, “ taking the money with you. ”

He caught up the money and had turned towards the door in too great agitation to think of adjusting the fall, when the door opened quietly and deliberately, and Mr. Boganio stood on the threshold.

His dark, clean-cut features scarcely moved, but his black eyes flashed fire as he looked at my visitor and then at me. The revolver was still in my hand and pointed towards the young man.

“What!” he said, “Mr. Vanderteufel! What does this mean?”

The young man’s face reddened, but the presence of a third person braced him up again.

“Yes—Mr. Boganio—rehearsing for a tragedy. The *dénouement* is postponed. I have won a thousand dollars.”

“And insulted a lady.”

“I rather like that from *you*, Boganio,” said young Mr. Vanderteufel. “What are *you* doing here?”

“Business,” replied Mr. Boganio, with gravity. “Perhaps, Miss Lisa, after the agitating interview you have just had, you would prefer my postponing the business I came upon?”

He said this with an air of studied deference and politeness.

I had laid the revolver on the table. Mr. Boganio’s appearance startled me,

as he was on such bad terms with Ben ; but, on the other hand, any one's presence at the moment was a relief ; so I said—

“ I can see you now, sir.”

Mr. Boganio gravely stepped out of the doorway to make room for the exit of Mr. Vanderteufel.

“ Mr. Fred,” he said quietly, “ had you not better put your veil on ? The get-up is admirable—but no one can mistake your face, and the house is full of your friends. I congratulate you on winning your bet, but you cannot say you have had a perfect success.”

“ Look here, Boganio,” said Vanderteufel, “ if you say another word about this, I'll thrash you to death—you infernal Jew. Good morning, miss,” he said, turning to me. “ I have hired the next room, where I shall proceed to change my dress. You may need protection

from this 'man of business,' in which case you have only to call out. I shall be at hand."

Mr. Boganio's face turned a greenish-yellow, but he was a man who always restrained himself.

"I shall have an opportunity of punishing your insults another time, young man, if you *are* the son of a millionaire."

"Take it when you get it!" cried the other with an easy air. "If you wish it, I can pay off all those bills to-morrow."

Boganio made no reply, but again stepping through the door, he bowed to me with the same courteous deference, and said in a calm voice—

"May I come in, madame, or would you prefer my awaiting you in the parlour?"

"You may come in, sir," I said, "since

you say it is a matter of business; but you know that Ben has all that in his own hands."

I was on one side of the table, Mr. Boganio sat down on the other side. I noticed that he was dressed even more carefully than usual. A camellia was in his button-hole, a diamond pin in his black satin cravat, and his small hands were covered with lavender gloves, over which on the little finger of the left hand sparkled a large diamond ring.

"Madame," he said, in a gentle voice, and looking across the table at me with a glance of friendly sympathy, "it would be perhaps more to your and his advantage if Mr. Ben Toddles did not attend to his own affairs; they might succeed better in your hands."

"I know nothing about business, Mr. Boganio, and I don't want to know."

Unconsciously at this moment my fingers wandered on the table to play with the handle of the revolver.

“Good heavens! madame,” said he with a shudder, “let us put that thing out of sight. It is not a thing for a woman to use.”

With a quick movement he laid his hand on it, and before I could prevent him, took it up and put it in his breast pocket. I confess I was frightened when I saw the malicious air of triumph which gleamed in his coal-black eyes as he secured it.

“What did you do that for?” I cried, starting up. “Remember Mr. Vander-teufel is in the next room.”

“Ah! yes,” said Mr. Boganio, coolly; “it is well that you reminded me of it. We will secure ourselves against intrusion.” And again, with a quick, easy,

determined movement, he glided to the door and locked it. "Now, Miss Lisa, we can discuss matters without any fear of interruption."

He calmly sat down again.

"I have nothing whatever to discuss with you, sir. Be good enough to see Mr. Toddles. I insist on your opening the door."

"It is of no use, *Mrs. Toddles*, if you wish me to call you so," he said with a sneer. "Ben Toddles is in the Tombs."

"In the Tombs?" I exclaimed with a piercing voice. "What does this mean?"

"Calm yourself, my dear. It is all right. He will, I hope, soon be liberated. But you see your husband is an English subject, and therefore *here* a foreigner. He is charged with fraudulent misappropriation in the accounts of my menagerie,

and his brother Tom is accused of complicity, so that it has been necessary, in order to prevent them from escaping, to apply to a judge to commit them until the case comes on for trial, and that will be when I am ready."

"Good heavens!" I cried, the tears coming into my eyes as I started from my seat, "are the laws of New York so barbarous? I will go to the prison at once! What *am* I to do? Poor Tom!"

"H'm!—and poor *Ben*, I should say, madame," said Mr. Boganio with a slight sarcasm in his tone. "Pray calm yourself and be seated. You can do nothing. You cannot even see them."

"It is *you* that have done this!" I cried in a loud voice, "thief and coward that you are; and you come here to take advantage of their absence."

"You will be the better for keeping

quiet," said Mr. Boganio in a menacing tone, "and not calling me any hard names. I am disposed to be your friend if you will let me. No one can help you but me. Will you sit down quietly and listen to what I have to say? After that you can do as you please."

I saw no harm in at least sitting down and ascertaining what his object was, and I now braced myself up firmly to hear him out, at the same time resolving in my own mind to call out loudly for my gallant young neighbour in case of need. I thought that the young fool was more likely to be honest and generous than this dry, shrewd man of business, with a dandy air and black eyes, and cool, calculating manner.

"Lisa," said Mr. Boganio, assuming a gentler tone, "you are very young and inexperienced. Such accidents will

happen to artistes, and you cannot always expect to have your husband beside you. You should look out for yourself—you are the better man of the two.”

“Excuse me,” I replied, “but I do not see what that has to do with the ‘business’ you came to speak about.”

“Well,” he said, “a girl like you, handsome, successful, courted” — he glanced round at the bouquets — “of course does not expect always to remain a simple artiste. You have a future before you, possibly a distinguished one.”

“I don’t understand you.”

“You can have half New York at your feet, and then half London, and half Paris, and half Vienna. You don’t mean to go on simply hanging from a trapeze for eighty dollars a week when you might be riding in a carriage, dressed in the handsomest costumes of the day and

covered with jewels. I see already," he said, his eyes twinkling, "that you wear a very handsome bracelet."

It was on my arm. I was fool enough to wear it even in the mornings. I could not help blushing, remembering that I did not know from whom it came.

"You wear it," he said, "without knowing what friend sent it to you. Shall I tell you frankly that it came from me, and never was my homage to a woman more loyal and hearty?"

He made a sort of gallant bow, sitting in his chair, and moving his stick and hat one in each hand.

"What! you, Mr. Boganio! Well, there it is;" and I tore off the bracelet and threw it across the table. "I did not wish," I said, "to keep it before, and certainly I would never have put it on my arm had I known where it came from."

Mr. Boganio bit his lip. His face became pale with anger.

“Mrs. Toddles,” he said, “I regret to be obliged to tell you that you are a fool in your own interests. And let me tell you something else : you are entirely in my power. What is the use of being so ill-natured ? ”

I was afraid these words menaced some violence, and I rose and leaned against the wall of the room where young Vanderteufel was waiting.

“Oh ! ” said Mr. Boganio, “you need not be afraid. I am not going to injure you. You will have to come by and by to sue me. I don’t take the trouble to sue you.”

“What do you mean, sir ? ” I exclaimed.

“I mean,” he answered, “that you are powerless. You will not be so proud

next week or the week after. Your husband's liberation depends upon me, and you cannot perform without him."

I started. The whole of his diabolical plot was clear before me. I seemed to be getting into a vice from which I could not escape.

"You have handed me back one valuable asset," said he, taking the bracelet in his gloved hand and putting it in his pocket. "Now, I will tell you something else: you are my *employée*."

"Yours! I am engaged at Mr. Breher's Saloon."

"I am Mr. Breher—or Mr. Breher is Mr. Boganio, or is not Mr. Boganio, as it suits me: You will get no more money from Mr. Breher until you come to reason. You must pay the bill at this hotel, and leave it immediately."

"I shall stay here as long as I like, sir."

“Excuse me, madam; the hotel belongs to me. Did you not wonder at the ease with which I was admitted here, in spite of your orders.”

“Get away!” I cried out; “you are a villain! I will expose you. Get out of my sight!”

My loud, passionate voice penetrated into the next room. A door opened, a hand was on the lock of my door, and Mr. Vanderteufel’s voice shouted—

“Open the door; let me in, or I will break it down.”

Boganio’s face became livid. He clenched his teeth together, and hissing out a curse, he drew the revolver from his pocket, poised it in his hand a moment, as if undecided, and then threw it on the bed.

“Take my advice,” he said, in a low voice; “say nothing, and think better

of it. I give you till to-morrow morning to stay here, and to decide whether you will rescue your friends from prison or go there yourself."

He quietly walked to the door, turned the key, and Mr. Vanderteufel rushed into the room in his ordinary costume.

"Well, sir!" cried Mr. Boganio, eyeing him sarcastically, "what do you mean by intruding here again?"

"I have 'intruded,' as you call it, to protect a poor girl from an infamous scoundrel!" said the young man hotly. "You cried out, Miss Lena; has he insulted you? I am ready to thrash him on the spot."

"For any sake no!" I cried, rushing forward. "What shall I do?" I wrung my hands, and covering my face with them, burst into tears. "I cannot bear this any longer; please be quiet and leave me."

“I am not afraid of him,” said Mr. Boganio. “Remember what I have said to you, madam. I wish you good morning.”

He went out into the passage. I was sobbing. Young Vanderteufel, a tall, elegantly dressed man, looked infinitely distressed.

“I entreat you, miss,” he said—he did not know I was married—“don’t cry like that. I implore you to forgive me! I have perhaps been the cause of this trouble. I wouldn’t have done it for fifty thousand dollars, had I foreseen this. Pray, pardon me, and tell me whether I can do anything to help you. I know Boganio too well.”

He took my hand kindly and led me to a chair, into which I sank, still sobbing. The door remained open, but he spoke in a low voice. If Boganio were waiting outside, he could not hear.

“Believe me,” said Vanderteufel, “I will make every reparation in my power. I give you my word of honour, you may trust me. Will you confide to me what is the matter?”

His tone was so earnest and his sorrow so evident that at length I became calmer and looked at him. He stood respectfully waiting until I could command myself sufficiently to speak.

“Boganio has put my husband and brother-in-law in the Tombs.”

“Your husband?”

“Yes; the man who performs with me.”

“You are married?”

“Yes.”

“Madam, again I entreat you to forgive me my folly and wickedness. I assure you I had no idea of it. I am not a saint, as you may suppose, neither

am I so wicked as you might think. Tell me the whole story. I am rich, and I may help your husband."

I told him everything that had passed with Boganio.

"Well," he said, "I always thought he was a double-dyed scoundrel—a regular Mephistopheles; but I never conceived of anything so bad as this. We must immediately retain a sharp lawyer. I think I know of one who will be a match even for Boganio, and I will charge myself with employing him. Meantime, you ought to leave this hotel to-day, and you must go where he cannot find you. I advise you to go out well dressed, leaving your things locked up. The bill shall be paid this afternoon. I will drive straight to the lawyer's, and will meet you at Delmonico's—nay, stay! there will be too many people who know you there.

Cross over to Jersey City, and go to the Washington Hotel, and secure yourself good rooms."

"My dear sir, I cannot consent to give you this trouble."

"Not a word. This you must permit me to do. I ask it as a favour. I offer it as a very poor reparation. You are as safe with me, on my honour, as you would be with your own brother. If you have any difficulty in getting off from this hotel send me a note to 260, Madison Avenue, and I will send the lawyer here to bring you away."

I saw no alternative to accepting this kindness from the penitent young gentleman. I thanked him warmly. He took my hand, and his eyes looked into mine.

"Am I forgiven?"

"Yes."

"Then we are friends, and you shall

never have cause to complain of the friendship.”

He went away. Mr. Boganio had left the hotel. With feverish haste I packed my things—secured about my person whatever valuables I had, selected and put on my prettiest dress, and slipping the revolver into my pocket, I walked out of the hotel as if I were going shopping. The key of my room was in my pocket.

“I beg pardon, madame,” said the clerk, “but will you leave the key of your room?”

“What for, sir?”

“Well, the manager wishes it. You see,” he added maliciously, “the two Mister Toddles have *changed their hotel*, and we must protect ourselves, madame. Very sorry. Guess it’s a mistake. They won’t be in long; but Mr. Boganio ain’t a man to let folks off easy.”

He performed the little operation which Americans call "snickering."

I turned from him with disgust. Outside the door stood Mr. Charlemagne Bunny, looking very seedy, very agitated, and very pale.

He came up to me.

"Oh! Mrs. Toddles," he said with real feeling in his rough voice, "is it true that the two poor boys is in quod?"

I nodded sadly.

"My, my!" he said, wringing his big brown hands. "Poor Tom, poor Ben; what are you going to do, Lisa? Can I help you? Let me do something."

"Go and let Tiger Tom loose at Mr. Boganio," I said. "He has done it all."

"By Jove, yes! The infernal rascal. I'd do it in a minute if I could catch him within range of the cage. You know we are at Barnum's now. He

bought up all poor Ben's animals. Where are you going dressed so gay, eh? "

Bunny really seemed a little dashed to see my appearance, when circumstances were what they were. It struck me that Bunny might be of some use to me.

"Hist!" he whispered, "there's the manager. This is Boganio's hotel, you know. Let us walk on together."

We went towards Broadway, the manager looking after us very sharply.

"Oh! Charley," I said, "will you help me? I am in terrible distress, and I want to get away where these people cannot find me."

"Help you? Of course I will. Here, just take my arm. No, by Jove! that won't do; I'm too seedy-looking for such a swell as you. Look here, where do you want to go to? "

"Jersey City."

“Well, I’ll drop behind and see you aren’t followed. If you are, I’ll pass you quickly and call a carriage, and wait for you at a corner. You just jump in, and we’ll drive off as fast as we can.”

Bunny soon went past me at a swingeing pace, muttering as he passed, “One of the fellows from the hotel is after us; keep straight on till you see the carriage round a corner, and then cut for it.”

Bunny’s manœuvre succeeded. He had the carriage drawn up two or three blocks farther on, with the door open. The instant I saw it I ran and jumped in; he followed and shut the door, and the Jehu drove off at a rattling pace, swinging us round corners, and making so many turns that it was hopeless for any one to follow us. Before three o’clock we were at the Washington Hotel, Jersey City, where Bunny took a bachelor’s room at the top, as my henchman.

CHAPTER VI

A PRETTY LODGING

MR. VANDERTEUFEL, accompanied by Mr. Luke Fibb, a well-known practitioner in hard cases in New York, where the genius of the people makes hard cases very common ones, was true to his rendezvous. Mr. Luke Fibb was like a galvanized skeleton. He was thin, yellow, wrinkled, yet full of energy. He was tall, with large hands and feet. It was curious to watch him. His elbows jerked out, his knee bones jerked out, his fingers jerked out, his feet jerked out; his chin would come forward with a jump, his

jaws would come together with a snap ; his very hair seemed to be filled with electricity and to rise up and return mysteriously to the cranium only for a second or two's repose, for it would fly out again in the wildest manner if a single word were said to contradict Mr. Luke Fibb's ceaseless flow of statement. In fact, nervous energy and mercurial vivacity were embodied in this extraordinary lawyer.

“ Now,” he said, “ my young friend here has told me all about you—darned pretty girl you are, too—all mischiefs, every one of you—married woman, I believe?—Mrs. Toddles, *alias* Lisa Lena, *née*—hum, *née* what? ”

“ Nay! why, yes,” I exclaimed.

Vanderteufel and the lawyer laughed heartily.

“ *Née* is French, miss—ma'am, I mean.

No, better say 'miss' as long as your respected mate is in the Tombs, eh? eh? Do you take—ha! ha!—what was I saying? Oh yes, *née* means born. Now I reckon you were born—with some name, perhaps?"

"Oh yes; my father's name was Mercer. I went by my mother's name, Bellamy."

"Hem, hem!" said Mr. Fibb, glancing with a wink at young Vanderteufel. "Little romance here—father's name Mercer—mother's Bellamy—young lady bears her mother's name; reckon we'll not dig any deeper in that sweet potato field, eh?"

"Oh!" I cried, "they were married, and he was a Southern officer and killed in the war. I liked my mother's name better than the other."

"All right, miss, all right, miss, so be

it. Born in holy wedlock; that's a pretty term, now, ain't it; I'll use that; identity now complete, *née* Mercer, *née* Bellamy, married Toddles—there you were a fool—commonly known as Miss Lisa Lena. Now you mustn't be surprised at anything. Boganio is about, I reckon, the very shrewdest, derndest, cussedest chap in New York, and there's only one man can trot the course ahead of him."

Here Mr. Fibb threw himself on the back of the chair with an energy that threatened to carry it entirely away, and looked at Vanderteufel and me with his eyelids partly drawn down over his eyes. Only a second, and they flew open again; he darted up, one leg flying out straight in one direction, his arm in an another, his hair standing off from his head.

"—One man to match him, and

you're lucky to have *him*. Now, miss, you just tell me your story, and I will go from here to the Tombs and interview your deceased—your entombed—your suppressed spouse—and will lead the devil a dance. I owe Boganio one, and he shall have it hard and hot like a steam-hammer, or my name ain't Fibb!"

Mr. Fibb, having secured all the particulars, bolted off to the Tombs, leaving Mr. Vanderteufel with me. A change had come over the young man. His manner to me was gentle and sympathetic. He behaved with the greatest courtesy. I told him what I had ventured to arrange with Bunny, and he approved it. He promised to see me again next day, and as he was leaving laid a pretty little *porte-monnaie* on the table. I found, on inspection, that it contained a thousand dollars. I be-

thought me that this was the money he had won, and I no longer hesitated about accepting it.

I was advised not to appear in the streets by daylight, as possibly Mr. Boganio might commence some suit against me, and have me arrested, or take me up as an accomplice of Ben and Tom. After dark, however, with a heavy heart I went out with Bunny to take a walk. Stupid as he was, his company was some comfort. We entered an ice-cream saloon and had ordered our ices, when who should enter and look straight at us but Mr. Boganio. His face was pale, and his eyes glowed with an angry expression. I dropped my veil and nudged Bunny, who was shovelling ice-cream into his mouth with perilous energy, and had not seen him enter. But it was too late. Mr. Boganio had recognised me—

indeed, he had followed us. How he found out I was in Jersey City I don't know. He came up to us.

“What are you doing here?” he said, in a peremptory tone. “You ought to be at Breher's.”

“Why,” I replied, “you told me yourself I could not perform without my husband.”

“You were bound to go there, though, and offer to do your work. You have broken your contract. I'll have a warrant out against you to-morrow.”

“Very well,” I said quietly.

“Why have you left the hotel?”

“I am not going to answer any questions.”

“Look here!” said Bunny, rising and striking an attitude. “This lady is under my protection.”

“Pshaw!” said Boganio with a sneer;

“mind your own affairs, Mr. Tiger-tamer. Madame, I insist on your going with me now. You had better come quietly, and not create a disturbance. I know where you are stopping ; and, if you don’t choose to come with me, I shall send a rougher messenger to take you to a lodging you won’t like.”

I was pale with fear, and knew not what to answer.

“Do you hear?” cried Bunny, facing Boganio, and speaking in a loud, thick tone ; “will you leave this lady alone?”

The people in the saloon looked round at the noise poor Charley made.

Boganio’s rage could be seen in his livid cheek, and the play of his glowing eyes.

“Did I not tell you not to interfere, you stupid fool?”

In another second Bunny leaned for-

ward, caught up Mr. Boganio's form in his big arms, carried him to the door, and pitched him out into the street. He hurried back to me, his face pale with the exertion.

"Get away," he said. "Get away as quick as you can. Cross the ferry, and drive straight to Mr. Vanderteufel's address. I will stay here and throw them off the scent."

I implored him to go with me, but he would not. He declared he would see it out. He led me to another door of the saloon, where there was naturally a good deal of excitement, pushed me into the street, and went back to answer for himself. I looked neither to right nor left, but went swiftly up the street, and turning a corner chanced upon a hack, which I immediately engaged and drove to the boat. Thence, by another carriage, I

got to Mr. Vanderteufel's address at nearly midnight. He was living in a handsome suite of rooms of his own, since his habits and engagements were not suitable to the *régime* of his father's house.

He was at home, and immediately on receiving my name from his valet came out in a brilliant dressing-gown and cap, with a long German pipe in his mouth.

"Why," he said, "I have been thinking of you while I was smoking. What brings you here?"

His voice and manner showed that he was not pleased, though I did not at the time appreciate the reason. The truth was that he began to think I was, after all, not so good as I had pretended to be.

He was soon undeceived.

"Good heavens!" he said, when he heard the story. "Boganio must have

gone mad. I never knew him to behave like this before. What on earth is to be done? ”

He walked up and down the pavement. The driver stood watching him curiously, and I, looking out of the window, sat in a state of agitation and suspense. At last Vanderteufel came back to me and put his head in at the window, in order that the cabman might not overhear.

“Miss Lena,” he said, “what I am going to propose to you is the best thing that occurs to me at this moment. Boganio is a wonderful man. He has agents everywhere—in every hotel—I was going to say in every street. You are hardly safe, perhaps, even with this driver, but I will take measures to secure him. Now, I am going to leave orders with my housekeeper, Hortense, who is the wife of my valet, a very respectable woman,

to prepare my rooms for you. While you are there I will not enter them. You will see nobody but Hortense. We shall now drive to an hotel, where I mean to put up. You will go in with your veil down and sit in the saloon while I engage rooms. Meanwhile the cabman will be sent away. Shortly after, when the coast is clear, we will walk back here. I will give you my latch key. Let yourself in, and make yourself at home. I hope it will only be an imprisonment of hours, at most a few days; but you will be more comfortable here than in the Tombs. Now, you see, my repentance is sincere."

I was deeply touched with the young man's kindness, and with the gentleness and gravity of his tone. I entreated him not to trouble himself so much about my fate; to let me shift for myself. I even reminded him that, were it to get out

that I had occupied his rooms, there would be scandal. There was, however, something strangely earnest in the way in which he insisted upon it. At length, feeling bound by the obligations under which he had laid me, I gave way.

The programme was carried out. We drove to the hotel, got rid of the cabman, and walked back to Madison Avenue. He left me at the door, and entering, I found myself in full possession of a bachelor's apartment, magnificently furnished, and which had been prepared, in our absence, as far as possible for the reception of a lady. The housekeeper, a woman of about thirty-five or forty years of age, of an agreeable countenance, with very white teeth, black hair and eyes, and a demure manner, received me. She was French, and had been a lady's-maid in Paris and New York, in

which latter place she had married Mr. Vanderteufel's valet, a man named Wentworth. He was much older than his wife, respectful and discreet; a man whose face rarely showed any feeling.

I threw myself on the bed, but could not sleep. My brain was in a whirl. The startling events of the past twenty-four hours, the anxiety, the novelty of my existing position, were enough to have upset a stronger mind than mine. My husband — Tom — poor Charley — Bunny — Boganio — Vanderteufel — Mr. Luke Fibb — followed each other in a mad dance through the chambers of thought. At length I felt as if my head would burst. I could not weep, and I found relief in a hearty fit of laughter. Again and again the room re-echoed with my mirth! It may have saved me from madness.

My thoughts went out kindly to Van-

derteufel. I was certain of his sincerity. I was not enough of a worldling to appreciate the peril and the doubtfulness of the situation which the young gentleman's kindness had created for him and for me. How often have I seen circumstances prove crimes against the innocent; the purest motives nullified by the form and manner of their development !

Hours had passed in incessant movement of thought and fancy. I turned restlessly about. I got up and walked the room. I fell on my knees, and wrung my hands and prayed. At times it seemed as if my heart must cease to beat, at others it pulsated with tumultuous energy. Then I lost consciousness.

In this state I appeared to have been removed into a vast limitless space. It is impossible to describe the scene, or the feeling it inspired of vagueness and awe.

In it came up shadowy forms—now Boganio, with that dreadful Satanic face and glance; Ben Toddles, with his round, turned-up nose and brown skin; young Vanderteufel, boyish, handsome, lithe, and yet supernaturally grave. What these shadows did, how they moved in and out, I could never after recall. A moment came when the whole strange limitless scene vanished, to give place to a small *tableau*. I saw as clear as life young Vanderteufel and my husband face to face—my husband's full of deadly passion, Vanderteufel's proud and pale and sorrowful. In a moment the young man's face was lying on the ground, a gash was in the forehead, the bright eyes were dim, the skin was livid, and I saw Ben Toddles, with features that seemed to reflect death, looking at me!

I shrieked out—my eyes opened—the

sun was shining through the windows, shining on the purple curtains and the rich carpet and the splendid ornaments of the room. Hortense entered.

“Did you call, madame? It is eight o'clock. Perhaps you would like some coffee?”

CHAPTER VII

AN END OF IT

At two o'clock in the afternoon Mr. Luke Fibb was announced. I received him in the parlour.

He jerked himself in, jerked his hand out to grasp and wrench mine, jerked his hat on the table, jerked a chair up close to mine, and jerked himself into it.

"Well!" he exclaimed, "this is an *Eye*-talian romance—nothing less. Here's a Lisa, a Boganio, a Vanderteufel, and now a Charleymang all in a mess together. Reminds me of the *Re*-naissance period—mixed nationalities. I'll

write a tragedy—no, I guess it would be a comedy—out of this, and Boganio shall put it on the stage if he survives the Royal Mr. Charleymang's Middle-age way of throwing fellows about. We shall beat Boganio now, I bet a thousand, thanks to Bunny; but Bunny—anything but a rabbit, by the way, eh?—ha! ha! poor Bunny; where do you think he is now?"

He jerked his head forward, and peered into my eyes as he asked the question.

"I hope he is in Jersey City?"

"He's in the Tombs!"

"Bunny in the Tombs? Oh, when is this going to end? I will go too."

"I wouldn't now! I should say you were pretty comfortable *here*," said Fibb, jerking out of his chair and running round the room.

He returned.

“Bunny is the finest fellow in the world. He’s won your case. Do you know what he did? Pitched Boganio on his head—concussion—brain fever. Will never be the same man. I’ve got him now, miss,” he shouted; “got him at last! When he comes to his senses he’ll go to the Tombs—change places with Mr. Benjamin Toddles, eh? What do you think of that?”

“How have you managed it?”

“Why, among those papers you gave me was a receipt signed by Boganio for two thousand dollars. He knew he had signed it; but he did not know that he had handed it to your respected *hub* along with some other papers—by mistake, miss—even the devil makes mistakes—and the *blank* fool made an affidavit that he never gave such a receipt and that the money was never paid. I’ve traced it—

to his bankers—paid in at date—in Ohio money—it was when your husband was last in New York—and he had brought it from Cincinnati. Clear case of perjury, eh? O my Boganio! I've got *you*, I reckon, tight as a trivet!"

And Mr. Fibb jerked out his arm, snapped his bony fingers together like a pair of castanets, and looked as proud as if *he* had laid the trap into which Boganio had fallen.

"But Ben and Tom?" I inquired.

"They'll be out to-night—bail found by a mutual friend—ha! ha!—eh? Nice rooms these. What a thing it is to be a millionaire!"

"Then I must go away from here and meet them. If Boganio is ill, I suppose I am safe now."

"No! no! Stop a bit. Whiskey Jim is his attorney, and you bet if Boganio's

brain *is* affected, Jim's ain't. You must stay where you are, and even your husband hadn't ought to know. I reckon I'll square this all up right away with Jim when I catch him ; but he's on the *tight* rope—eh?—Ha ! ha !—d'ye see?—to-day—and maybe for a week, but when he's finished that performance he'll be glad enough to let you all off to save his client. Now I'll skedaddle—don't you fret—I'll tell your husband—the respected Toddles—you're quite safe, and can be produced to order. Well! you're a pretty girl—and I like you—good bye.” And with a jerk he again wrenched my hand, and with another jerk opened the door, shut it with a slam, and disappeared.

Suddenly the door opened again, and his head jerked in at the end of his long neck—

“ Mind—you will hear from me—

personally. Don't stir from here till I come to fetch you."

I was left alone. Hour after hour passed. There were plenty of books, but I was too excited to read. My life had always been a physically active one. The restraint was torture. I was like a caged lioness.

At about nine o'clock in the evening Hortense came in to me.

"Mr. Vanderteufel is at the door, madam, on the street, and presents his compliments, and wishes to know how you are, and whether you are comfortable?"

"Oh!" I said, innocently. "Why does he not come up and speak to me? I am dying to see some one."

Hortense smiled and shook her head.

"No, madam, he will not enter while you remain here."

"Very well, then. I will go to him.

I *must* have some exercise and air. Ask him if I may put on my things and go out to him in the street."

This Mr. Vanderteufel allowed. I joyfully dressed, and ran out like a child from school or from punishment. He gave me his arm, and we walked up Madison Avenue.

I thanked him again warmly for his generosity. He made nothing of it, and begged me to feel that I had incurred no obligation. He expressed his gratification at Mr. Luke Fibb's news, which he had heard in the morning. I was still struck by his strange gravity. At times he said nothing. When he did speak it was in low, gentle, thrilling tones. As we turned homewards he began to talk more seriously than ever.

"Lisa," he said,—“you will let me call you so?—I owe you more than I can ever

repay. I won a wager, but I nearly lost myself. Now, you have been the means of performing a miracle—you have recovered me—I have found myself again. I came to you that day one of the most thoughtless and light-hearted *roués* in New York. That is over. I have been led to think of my life, to ask myself what I was doing, and whither it would all lead? My mother was a saint. She died when I was fifteen. Had she lived I should perhaps—I don't know—have been a different man. I promised her on her death-bed to follow her"—his voice trembled, and he was deeply affected—"where she was going. . . . What have I done? How have I kept my vow? Golden days and opportunities have gone for ever. But I have resolved to change—to break with the past—to try to repair it by a better future. You are the cause

of this. I shall ever be grateful to you—and the little I am now doing is but a poor recompense for a changed life and a better nature.”

This talk was far above me, but I could appreciate some of its loftiness and purity of motive. It was a strange thing for a simple trapezist to listen to, walking along the silent and unfrequented street in company with one of the most fashionable dandies and renowned fast men in New York.

At the door Mr. Vanderteufel left me, and went off to his hotel.

The next day passed for me in lonely and anxious suspense. No note from Vanderteufel, no visit from Mr. Luke Fibb, no means of learning what was going on. I seized on books and tried to read; I stared out of the window on Madison Avenue; I went through a

series of exercises ; but I could not turn my mind from the wildest fancies and surmises. What was going on ? Hortense came in and talked to me ; but I did not wish to confide to her my sorrows, and though she was a lively little Frenchwoman, we could not find very much to interest us in common. She could talk glibly about her employer.

“It is a very pretty gentleman, and so *gentil* !”

She thought I cared to hear this, and, for my part, I was so glad to listen to a human voice that I let her run on. However, she could not chase away the clouds that had settled around my heart. Evening came. I had dined, and was lounging on a sofa, trying to read the “Mysteries of Paris,” when I heard the brass gong at the door go once—twice—thrice—sharp, quick, and loud. Then I

heard an exclamation from Wentworth, followed almost immediately by a scuffling and by piercing shrieks from Hortense—

“ *O! mon pauvre fils! mon pauvre fils! O! Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* ”

I jumped from the sofa, my heart beating, the sweat starting from my brow, and a terrible thrill of dread passing through my whole being. Before I could reach the door, it opened, and Hortense, wringing her hands, precipitated herself into the room, shrieking out, while the tears streamed from her eyes—

“ *Il est mort!* ”

And she fell senseless upon an easy chair. Men were following her. They bore something tenderly in their arms, covered with a white cloth. Wentworth silently came before them wringing his hands, his face pale and stern, and without a tear. I was rooted to the floor with

horror. I could not speak. The men did not look at me. One of them was a young fellow whom I had often seen in the box with Vanderteufel at the music hall. They entered the large, magnificent bedroom. They laid their burden on the bed. Instinctively I followed them. Gently they put it down; gently they lifted the sheet.

Before me was the face of Vanderteufel. Across the smooth white brow was a cruel gash; there was pain in the livid, set features. I fell upon the floor.

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CHAPTER VIII

AN ANGEL

I CAME to myself in a small, neat room. I was in a bed, surrounded with white dimity curtains; there were pure white curtains drawn across the windows, admitting a subdued and mellow light. A young woman with a white, close-fitting cap, and a black dress, on the bosom of which was a cross, sat working a *crochet* needle. She was tall, thin, and pale, with a noble brow and fine-cut features. I fancied I had seen her before. Her white fingers looked transparent. The ivory purity and delicacy of her skin was

made even more striking by finely pencilled eyebrows and hair that could only be called "raven," from its blackness and glossiness. It had a natural little ripple in it, and was so strong and thick that it was with difficulty the small cap confined it.

My eyes opened upon her as she sat at the foot of my bed, and for a moment I gazed at her silent and astonished, while, apparently engaged in deep thought, she went on with her work.

At length I moved. Her eyes were lifted quickly and caught mine. She ran to me and looked into my face.

"Thank God!" she said, clasping her hands over the crucifix, "you are better."

"Where am I? How came I here?"

"Hush! You are in good hands, don't you see? And now you must save all

your strength. You will learn all by-and-by."

"No, no!" I said, trying to sit up. "I cannot wait—I know now—I remember—*he was dead!*"

I burst into tears.

She put her arms round me and soothed me. Her own eyes were filled with tears.

"Did you love him?" she said.

A strange feeling came over me. It seemed as if some unexpressed thing in my life had suddenly risen within me and become a reality.

"I would have done," I cried, "if I might."

"Did you ever tell him so?"

"Never."

"He loved you?"

"I do not know. He never told me."

"Oh, thank God!" she said.

And she went on her knees and clasped her hands, and I could see her lips moving in prayer.

Retaining her position, she went on—

“Then he was sincere—he had repented—he is safe—he was not guilty of the sin they accuse him of. Hortense and Wentworth are true, and you—you are innocent! Tell me, are you not?”

A flush came over my face—the blood carrying ever, as it were, the record of my former shame; but I looked at her steadily.

“Of sin with Albert Vanderteufel I am innocent as you.”

She jumped up and put her arm round my neck and kissed me.

“It is the first time,” she said; “I would not do it till I heard from your

own lips that you were guiltless, though I believed it."

"Did *you* love him ? "

" Yes," she said. " He was my brother."

CHAPTER IX

THE SEQUEL

THE mercy of God had taken away my senses and laid me unconscious for weeks. The inquest was over. I gradually learned the facts.

When poor Charley Bunny was taken to the Tombs, he managed to have an interview with the two prisoners who had preceded him. Indeed, Mr. Fibb, who, with all his smartness, could not possibly have foreseen the consequences that would result from it, had arranged to bring them together, as Vanderteufel had engaged him to defend them all. Bunny

told Ben Toddles what had occurred to me, so far as he knew. His story would naturally be only what he learned from me, with his own deductions. He had found me leaving the Bowery Hotel to avoid Boganio. I had told him that Mr. Vanderteufel, whose name and appearance were perfectly well known to most of the *artistes* in New York, had taken care of me; that he had rescued me from Boganio, and arranged to meet me in a hotel in Jersey City. Then he must have related how Boganio had followed us, and have given an account of his own quarrel with Boganio, and of my flight, at his suggestion, to Vanderteufel's abode. Thenceforward nothing more was known about me. Mr. Luke Fibb, for the reason given to me, disclaimed all knowledge of my whereabouts. He ought to have considered that the natural thing for the

men to do was to go and ask Vanderteufel where I was. Both of them were angry with my benefactor. Their own knowledge of human nature was narrow and, unhappily, of one kind. They never thought of giving him credit for innocent kindness, and no one who looked at the circumstances from without ever could, or ever did, do so. No sooner, then, were they out of the Tombs, than they resolved to look up Vanderteufel. They were let out at seven o'clock in the evening. The first thing they did was to satisfy the cravings of hunger and thirst.

They went to a Bowery restaurant and drank heavily. Ben was quite drunk when he came away. He had some design, however. Going along the street he saw a bundle of American axe-handles at a doorway. They were made of hard hickory, and at one end shaped to enter

the eye of the axe. Such instruments are frequently used in American and Canadian election riots, and they give fearful blows. He went in and bought one. With this under his arm, Ben Toddles, accompanied by his brother, was making his way between nine and ten o'clock up Madison Avenue, when whom should they meet but Vanderteufel walking with a friend.

Ben rushed up to him, shaking his stick.

"Where is my wife? where is Lisa?"

"Why, who are you?" said Vanderteufel.

"I am her husband, Ben Toddles."

"Well, toddle off, my good fellow; Mr. Fibb will tell you where she is in good time."

"You took her away," interposed Tom Toddles, hoarsely.

"Look here," said Vanderteufel, "my

good friends, I have just got you out of gaol. Not a hair of the lady's head is hurt. She is perfectly well, but your own attorney, Mr. Fibb, said it was not advisable for her to show just now."

"Will you tell me where she is?" persisted Ben. He spoke in a menacing tone.

"He's drunk," whispered Vanderteu-fel's friend to him.

"That is the very reason I won't tell him to-night. He will go and kick up a row.—No," he said to Ben Toddles, "I won't tell you where she is."

"Then take that!" and the axe handle wielded by Ben's powerful hand came down crash on the young man's head, cutting down his hat and inflicting a great gash on the beautiful brow. He sank to the earth with a groan. His friend supported him.

"Don't tell him," he said faintly. But

the two men, like cowards of their class, were making off." "Carry me home. She is there. And Willy, Willy, tell Eva to take care of her. I—I——" he struggled to add some words, but his head fell flaccid, and he was dead.

The event had excited the greatest horror in New York. The papers were full of it. The grossest scandals were freely published. It was stated that the poor fellow had carried me off. Many good people expressed their sympathy with Ben Toddles. I was supposed to be lying at the point of death, and the morning and evening papers contained bulletins of my progress. Such is the enterprise of modern journalism, which gives to crime, scandal, and gambling ten columns to one of religion and morality. Notwithstanding the evidence given by Wentworth and Hortense of the

manner in which I had been introduced into the rooms in Madison Avenue, and their declaration that Vanderteufel had never entered them while I was there, no one believed them, and least of all the family of Vanderteufel—with one exception, his sister Eva.

Eva Vanderteufel was a young lady of a religious turn of mind, who had been brought under the influence of a ritualist movement begun by an Episcopal minister in New York. She gave herself up entirely to religion and good works, and though she lived with her father, was attached to a small society of “sisters,” which had a home in the west-end of the city. On the day of his death her brother had come to her. He had spoken to her earnestly, and with emotion. He told her that he had resolved to change his life. But he did not say a single word

about me. Conceive of her pain and sorrow when she heard of his death, and that I, who had been found in his rooms, was lying in a hospital to which they had sent me. Every one else believed the deceased to be guilty. She cherished a faith in his innocence. After questioning Hortense, she came to me, had me removed to one of the private rooms in the hospital, and donning her nursing dress, devoted herself to my recovery. With eminent brutality the reporters followed her into the sick-room. Nauseous headings appeared in the New York papers.

THE VANDERTEUFEL MURDER.

HIS SISTER NURSES LISA LENA.

LOVELY AND CHIVALROUS DEVOTION OF
A RITUALISTIC SISTER.

SHE BELIEVES IN HIS INNOCENCE.

CHARITY NEVER FAILETH.

THE SICK-ROOM—EVA VANDERTEUFEL
ADMINISTERS THE MEDICINE WITH
HER OWN HAND.

New York society, and the gaping millions of a great republic, interested themselves in the simple dress of my nurse and in the cut and fineness of my night-cap. It became necessary for the hospital authorities to station policemen near the door to prevent enterprising pressmen from forcing themselves into the room or following Miss Vanderteufel about the corridors.

I recovered very gradually, and afterwards Eva Vanderteufel took me down to Newport, where my convalescence became complete. She kept silence about my husband and the events that were occurring. I was not allowed to see a newspaper. Ben Toddles, however, had been committed for murder, and Tom as an accessory. The trial was postponed to await my recovery.

Why need I recall the dreadful and

agonizing incidents of that period? They are written in lines of fire and blood upon my memory. To see poor Ben and Tom in the dock; to stand up and give my evidence in a breathless court, and by-and-by to hear the summing-up, and finally the verdict—it is all too terrible to tell, and I will not recall it. Ben was sentenced to imprisonment for life, and Tom for seven years. Boganio recovered from his shaking, but he was never the same man again.

CHAPTER X

FIGTOWN

AN outcast, without a hope of return. Such was my position after the terrible incident I have related. Believed by society to have committed the unpardonable crime—to be found out; avoided by those who, a short time before, were what is called “friends,” or who would eagerly have sought my acquaintance; branded by the public as the wife of a felon; and rejected even by those who purvey notorieties to the public—I was indeed a Pariah.

My only friend was Eva Vanderteufel. Of course there was not much in common

between us. She was a refined and cultured woman; I only a rough, half-ignorant, inexperienced girl. Love for her brother went a long way to make her endure my companionship. And she tried to do me good. She encouraged me to read. She succeeded in implanting in me a taste for books, which I never lost. She took a lodging for me in a farmhouse near a small town in Jersey, and there, among simple, quiet people, I hoped to forget the feverish past—to live in a cooler and more healthy atmosphere. I read and improved my mind; and for a time again came under religious influences, but of a new kind. It seemed as if my life were to be redeemed, though to me there was but a dreary outlook. What was to be my future? Whither could I turn for the means of an honest life and the prospect of an untroubled peace?

Still, these were halcyon days, when the restless spirit dwelt in calm, and the turbid torrent of life seemed to have reached a lake of gentle and passionless repose.

Happy hours! Seductive and hollow tranquillity!

No one in the remote town which Eva Vanderteufel had chosen knew my history. The farmer with whom I lived was a keen and intelligent old Pennsylvanian of English descent, a fact of which he was very proud. He thought he had English ideas because he preserved a few old traditions of English habits and manners from his grandparents. One of these habits was to take a glass of hot grog every night before going to bed. He never drank it at any other time, but for forty years he had continued the custom which had been that of his father and

grandfather before him. He was an erect, white-headed old man, having a keen blue eye, and pleasant features, with the exception of a prodigiously long chin, which gave a strong, dogmatic favour to his countenance. His wife was an American, from Philadelphia, thin and prim and quakerish, with two bands of silver hair smoothed down under a white cap above the pale oval of her face. She was cold in manner and nature, while her husband was warm and a bit of an enthusiast. They had several children, of whom only two remained at home: a son named Algernon, or Algy, and a daughter who had received, by some odd freak of her parents, for which I leave philosophers to account, the high-sounding name of Juanita. She was commonly called at home and abroad Hua.

These good people, named Atwood,

had been taken by the services of a church opened by the ritualists in Fig-town, and having for its pastor the Rev. Shuttleworth Massey. Mr. Massey was a pale little man, active, earnest within his narrow limits, well-meaning, but weak as ditch-water. Ritualism, needing so little of the intellectual, and supplying so much of the æsthetic, was just the religion for such a man, and I suppose that for such men God graciously supplies it. Mrs. Massey, in capacity, was worth two of her husband, but she unhappily could not wear his gown, any more than his breeches, though she behaved as if she carried them both. In the Massey family there was also a son and a daughter; the former grown up and preparing to follow his father's steps, and take to millinery and devotion. There were some eight or ten families who

attended the little church, besides casuals and individual members. Mrs. Massey was a sharp proselytizer, and so was Miss Caroline Massey, and they kept the Methodist and Unitarian ministers in the town quite wide awake and up to their duty. The mother was regarded by them as the veritable scarlet woman; and as if to maintain the character, she used to wear a violent red petticoat, which acted on those estimable ministers as it would have done upon a bull. There was a great deal of intercourse between the Atwoods and the Masseys, and before I went to live among them I fancy on both sides there had been nourished a sort of expectation that the young people would "collogue," and so knit the families in a close bond of union.

Introduced to this little circle by Miss Vanderteufel, I was naturally at once

placed on a good footing with the clergyman, whose church I fancy, which meant in effect the minister's pocket, received from time to time gratifying testimonies of her sympathy in his work. They called on me after my arrival, invited me to their house, and were exceedingly kind; but I pleaded affliction as a reason for retirement, and for a long time, extending over some months, I never went out of my room except to an evening walk alone, or to attend the little church on Sunday, my veil down, my dress carefully subdued in tone and fashion.

My life was apathetic and colourless. I read, or I sat and thought, or tried to write to Eva some of my thoughts; but I rarely sent them to her, for I shrank from bringing my ignorance under her notice.

Her letters, however, and Mr. Massey's

zeal, coming upon me in my then humour, brought on a religious turn. I attended the services with great regularity, kept the fast-days very strictly, and as one result among others won the approval of Mrs. Massey. Finding me so dull, she tried to rouse me, by bringing me into the work of the Dorcas and Visiting Society, and in this way I was gradually brought out of my shell, began to feel anew some of the vigour of life, and to look around me and observe what was going on. Moreover, I recovered my old coquetry of dress and manner. Old Mrs. Atwood shook her head at some of my dresses, and warned me that the heart set on such trifles could hardly be free from a worldly taint. But she was a sensible woman, and never carried her criticisms or her remonstrances beyond a bearable point. Mrs. Massey, of a

stronger and more worldly disposition, was on the contrary, or affected to be, pleased to see me waking up a little. I went into their charitable work with much energy, and for a few months it kept me from *ennui*, and I felt satisfied that I had found a home and a work, congenial, peaceful, and above all, elevating.

I was destined, however, to learn that the devil dwelt in Figtown, or within an easy walk of the place, and that, looking down, or up, upon this happy life, he had resolved to bring it to an end.

Young Massey was a curious compound of the natures of his father and mother. He was thin and weak like his father, though much taller, and yet had some of the energy and vivacity of his mother. He had a curious appearance, at twenty-two years of age, with a long thin-clothed

coat, a white band round his neck, his face clean shaven. Not a bad face; a little sensual, perhaps, in the rounded chin and jaw, but above the mouth, with its long straight nose, hazel eyes and high forehead capped by good brownish-red hair, it was by no means a mean or vulgar countenance. He wore very thick spectacles. He promised to be much cleverer than his father, who even now was very much under his influence. The sister, Caroline, was exactly like the father, small, delicate, pretty enough, but not of a brilliant turn of mind. With her had been deeply in love Master Algy Atwood, a big brown fellow, tall and straight, with great hands and feet, and a plain face lighted by his father's grey-blue eyes.

This young man I met every day at meals in his father's house. Miss Van-

derteufel had informed the Atwoods that I was married, but had suffered a great calamity, and they received me with the utmost frankness and confidence. Mrs. Atwood had looked at me through her silver-rimmed spectacles, as I entered the door of her great kitchen one afternoon, and after taking in all my clothes, and at length fixing her attention on my pale face and features, had put out her hand and said—

“ You have suffered, dear, I see. I see it in your eyes and face. Well, you are welcome, and God bless to you your stay under our roof.”

Her daughter, who had much of the gravity of the mother, came and took my hand and led me into my room. It was a delightful little room, with clean, milk-white boards, spotless curtains and bedding, slips of a bright rag-carpet making the floor gay with colour.

I was tired and sorrowful. I threw off my bonnet, and flinging myself, in my impetuous way, on the bed, hid my face in the pillow and let the tears run fresh and free.

“Do not cry so, madam,” said Hua. She had put an arm around me. “Your sorrow may be great, but so is the consolation, and loving the Consoler. We hope you will be happy with us.”

From that moment Hua and I struck up a little friendship, and withal her quiet, sober manner, it suited so exactly my frame of mind, that I came to like her, and be intimate with her. She very soon confided to me one of life’s most important secrets; she was in love with young Massey.

“He is so pale, and so lovely,” she said; “and so divine, especially in spectacles. He loves only his work and God.”

“And you want him to love *you*, Hua?”

“A little—only a little,” she pleaded. “I want to help him in his work, to be by his side, to know of his struggles, and if I could, to help him and encourage him.”

The little, blue-eyed maiden, pleasant, but not fine looking, was gazing upwards and onwards into vacancy as she spoke these words.

“And is he so devoted to his work that he never looks at you?”

“Never!” she said. “He is as cold as ice. I shrink from attracting his glance. He seems so wrapped up in his duty, his religion, that he never wants to notice what is around him. I am happy only to be allowed to look at him. Oh, he is lovely!”

I was hardly able at that time to ap-

preciate, as I am now, this charming little piece of innocence, but I used to try and encourage her to believe that the day would come when Master Victor Massey's heaven-turned eye might take a glance downwards to the modest violet and buttercup at his feet, and recognize the fact that the stars are not all the works of God which are worth a study, or have a use, or teach a lesson.

When at length Mrs. Massey, in her peremptory way, dragged me out of my retirement and obliged me to go over to the minister's house, to aid in sewing and embroidering vestments, not only for their own church, but for others in various parts of the state, where there was a sad want of ritualistic paraphernalia, I soon became at home with the family. Mr. Massey, senior, was effusively kind, and the pretty little Miss Massey, simply

brought up, seemed to be quite overcome with admiration of my rich dressing and large, effective appearance.

I remember on the first visit I stayed to tea, and was for the first time presented to Mr. Victor Massey, who arrived just in time for the grace, which was performed standing, thus :

MR. MASSEY. "The eyes of all wait upon Thee."

ALL. "And Thou givest them their meat in due season."

MR. MASSEY. "Grant, O most merciful," etc.

He then made the sign of the cross with his finger in the air; the company crossed themselves and sat down.

Now, Mr. Victor's divine gaze through the divine spectacles which had so hit Miss Hua Atwood was on this evening by no means fixed upon things above; for

having been hurriedly introduced to me the moment before, those eyes stared at my face through those spectacles, while his lips moved mechanically to the well-worn words of the benediction. The spirit of fun and coquetry lived and moved in me then irrepressibly, if somewhat subdued; and I noticed the saintly Victor's gaze, which rather embarrassed me, for his spectacles were thick pebbles, and had an unpleasant effect when turned full on one's eyes. I threw a sharp glance across the table from my own black orbs, and Victor, with a blush, bent his gaze on his plate and hardly removed it during the meal, sitting in perfect silence; and yet, as I talked with one and another, I fancied that the heavenward glance was sometimes furtively depressed in my direction. My bonnet was off, my rich black hair coiled up upon my head, my

white neck rose out of a neat white collar, and a dark, tight-fitting dress displayed my figure, I dare say, to perfection.

When tea was over Master Victor joined us in the little parlour.

Mrs. Massey looked at him with some surprise as he stalked in after us.

“Are you not going to study to-night, Victor?” she inquired.

“No,” he said. “What is going on?”

“We are full of work—a surplice to be finished by Mrs. Bellamy.” She threw me a thing which looked curiously like a bedgown for a prize-fighter.

I set demurely to work, hemming the border round the bottom. Victor was still standing, and remained so for a minute or so watching me. I took the opportunity of breaking my thread, and suddenly looking up caught his glance.

A faint flush went again over his pale face, and turning round he sat down at the piano, and played with an indifferent skill the tune to the words, "*Abide with me.*" I don't believe for a moment that he meant anything by this, but it struck me as rather droll that he should have hit upon that particular sentiment.

When he had strummed away for some time, Mrs. Massey became tired of it, and begged him to come and read to us.

"What?"

"Anything."

"The *De Imitatione Christi*?" he said faintly.

"No," replied Mrs. Massey; "I read it every morning, as you know. Nor Erasmus, nor 'Dr. Witte on the Mass,' nor 'Missal Hours.' To-night, as we have a guest, read us something lighter."

"I will go to my room and see," he

said, glaring at me again. "What do you like, madam, poetry or prose?"

"Oh, poetry—or Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress.'" I said this with perfect innocence, but a shudder went through the trio, and Victor almost seemed to turn green.

"My dear Mrs. Bellamy," cried Mrs. Massey with some asperity, "*please* don't mention that book again in this house. It is sadly profane and heretical."

"It is wonderfully interesting," I replied stoutly. "I have always liked it."

Victor Massey was gazing at me. His eye grew a little softer as he looked.

"Ah!" he said. "Forgive my mother if she speaks a little warmly. Doubtless the book is fanciful and attractive, but it is sheer Calvinism—self-righteousness; it has led away many souls from the true

path—from the Rock, the Church. I hope we shall be able to give you better books to read than that, and more conducive to holiness. But now I will go and get some poetry.”

He stalked out of the room like a long black spectre in his priest-like frock, and with his soft, gliding tread.

Presently he came back again. I happened to see his face as he came in at the door, and I noticed that it was slightly flushed and his eye was brilliant. There was a sort of *honte* in his manner.

“What have you got?” said Mrs. Massey, not looking up from the flannel petticoat she was making for a poor Irish-woman.

“Byron,” he said, sitting down in an armchair with his back to us. I could see he was red to the tips of his ears, a remarkable phenomenon in him.

Mrs. Massey gave a sort of grunt, but said nothing, and Miss Caroline glanced across at him with surprise in her face.

"I hope, my dear Victor, you will select something that will tend to edification," said his mother. "The 'Prisoner of Chillon,' perhaps, will be the best."

"I will read the 'Giaour,'" he replied, turning over the leaves.

He read pretty well, and as I did not know Byron, I was deeply interested. The evening wore away, and I was to go back to my domicile. Mr. Massey, who had spent the evening in his room, was slightly indisposed. Mr. Victor was therefore detached for the duty of escorting me home. I begged to be allowed to borrow the book of Byron's poems, a request that rather startled Mr. Victor, who, however, was caught in a trap, and could scarcely venture at the moment to

explain to me that there were things in Byron which it might not be expedient for me to read.

When we got out into the quiet darkness he offered me his long thin arm, which felt like the rail of a chair. There was a slight moonlight, which fell upon his glasses with a curious ghastly flicker. I confess my heart beat a little, for something told me that Mr. Victor was not exactly all he seemed to Miss Hua. His eyes were looking earthwards now, at all events, and I could hardly help thinking what a start it would have given him to know who it was that leaned upon his arm.

We went along some time in silence. His arm was so long and stuck out so far that he was a considerable distance from me, and he turned now and then to catch a glimpse of my face in the un-

certain light. I dropped my veil as far as my nose, which must have disappointed him, for afterwards he looked straight before him. At length he spoke.

“Have you never read Byron before, Mrs. Bellamy?”

“No,” I replied.

“You are very young,” he said gallantly, “but still I wonder at that.”

“I have read in other directions,” I said evasively.

“What directions?” inquired Mr. Victor with coolness.

I was very nearly floundered. How could I give him the outline of my small performances in literary culture, and on the other hand how could I confess my ignorance? I was indeed in a false position.

“I am not a great reader,” I replied.
“A few books satisfy me. I have read

a good many novels—Dumas, Dickens, Thackeray, and others.”

“All bad: it lowers the tone, and perverts the moral faculties.”

“And Byron?”

“Well, his is poetry. But I must warn you not to read everything in Byron—‘Don Juan,’ for instance.”

“Is it very bad?”

“Very. I would rather you did not take this book with you. I don’t wish to be responsible for placing it in your hands.”

“Oh!” I replied, “Mr. Victor, I think you may entrust it to me. I am a married woman, you know.”

“And your husband?” he said convulsively.

“Is dead.”

I had told a lie. I could not help it. It came out of me as involuntarily as a cough or a sneeze.

“ Ah ! ” he said, in a tone half sympathetic, half relieved, “ that is then your sorrow, my dear madam. You are a widow.”

His long arm, with its tremendous leverage, seemed to draw my hand with irresistible force nearer to his side.

“ I hope we shall see a good deal of you,” he said after a short pause. “ And you must come and help us in our visiting. This promises to be a sick winter here.”

“ It will give me great pleasure to be of use,” I said. “ I am dull. I want something to do.”

“ And perhaps you will let me lend you some books ? ” he said eagerly.

I thanked him warmly. He had thawed a little, and I was grateful, though I felt troubled about the lie I had told him.

On saying "good night" at Farmer Atwood's door, he pinched my hand I thought needlessly hard with his bony fingers. Big Algy Atwood had come to the door with a light, and was looking at us with large, keen eyes.

"So you walked home with Milky?" he said, referring thus irreverently to Victor, who was no favourite of his.

"Yes ; Mr. Massey was unwell, and could not come."

"Well, look here, Mrs. Bellamy," said Algy, planting his long legs some three feet apart, and looking down upon me with his honest eyes ; "whenever you are going to be out for an evening again you tell me, and wet or dry you may reckon I will come to fetch you."

"Thank you, Mr. Algy ; but I mustn't trouble you so much."

"Better to trouble a friend than a

stranger," said Algy, sententiously putting himself without any previous warning, or even hint, in a position of intimacy.

That night as I went to bed I turned things over in my mind, and felt far from comfortable.

CHAPTER XI

A FRESH COMPLICATION

WHEN I had read Byron through, as I did rapidly, I formed a very different opinion of Mr. Victor Massey from that held by the gentle and confiding Hua. If you ask "why?" you cannot know human nature. It would be very hard for me to put together in words a definition of the reasons which led me to this conclusion. There is so much which a woman of quick perception or a man of nervous sensibility sees and feels and yet can never give a reason for or describe: a sensitive magnetism which conveys from soul to

soul ideas and feelings and even convictions, for which there appear no material grounds. I was always from a child a rather shrewd observer of the human face, and had an intuitive perception of the thoughts and tempers of those around me. And Mr. Victor, with his delicate, sensitive organization, was as transparent to me as glass. I could see the slightest play of light in his eye, the feeblest rush of blood to his face, the nervous twitching of the mouth or finger, and each of these phenomena conveyed to me a certain meaning, on which I relied as positively as if each had been explained by himself in spoken language. And yet I could not bring myself to look upon him with any sympathy. He began to devote himself to me. We went out together to visit sick people, to carry comforts to poor houses, to read to bedridden women

or amuse children. I threw myself into this work out of no love to him, but from a sheer longing to get rid of my thoughts—to be at work—to move my body and occupy my mind. There was a certain amusement also in watching Mr. Victor's manœuvres and checking them. Once or twice he became very friendly, took my arm familiarly, and squeezed my hand. On these occasions he would speak to me on spiritual things, and thus he mixed sentiment with religion.

Meanwhile another danger arose in the horizon. After that night when "Milky" had left me at the door Algy assumed perforce a sort of guardianship over me. He hardly allowed me to go about alone. I found him turning up in all sorts of unexpected quarters, waiting for me opposite any small cottage I had visited,

and marching me off from Mr. Victor's care, with the air of a picket securing a deserter. He stayed at home at night and saw as much of me as he could. He said nothing. He never ventured to squeeze my hand or ogle me. He simply stuck by me—a long, awkward, contented, honest-faced companion, out of whom I could get little or nothing but interjections; except now and then when we were alone, and he would try to make himself agreeable by telling me everything about the farm. Dear old Algy, you were as honest and simple-hearted a soul as I ever met!

One day—it was in winter, the snow was on the ground—Victor Massey came in the afternoon to tell me there was a severe case of small-pox in the village. Every one had fled the house, and the patient, a young married woman with a

child, was without any nurse except her husband, who gallantly stuck by her bedside.

“What is to be done?” said Victor. His usually pale cheek had a hectic flush upon it. He looked at me anxiously. “My sister would go,” he continued, “but my father does not see the call, and I am at my wits’ end.” It was not far.

Mrs. Atwood and Hua and I were sitting in the large kitchen of the farm enjoying the warm glow of the fire, where hoe-cake was rapidly baking.

“I will go!” cried Hua, quickly—“if you would like me to.”

He looked at her with disappointment in his face.

“Oh, Hua!” he said, “you are too young to undertake it; and, indeed, it ought to be done by a married woman.”

And then he looked earnestly at me.

Hua's face darkened as she caught the glance.

"I will go," I said at once. "Will you have any objection to take me back, Mrs. Atwood, if I go?"

"No, my child," said the old lady. "The Lord will preserve you and us, I trust; and if not, His will be done."

"Then the sooner I get ready the better."

Another grateful glance from Victor, bringing a deeper shadow on Hua's face and a little glistening in her eyes.

She followed me into my room.

"At least let me help you," she said.

She went on for some time putting together the few things I meant to take, which would all have to be destroyed.

"Lisa," she said—we were now on familiar terms—"don't you think Victor Massey is changed? What do you think

is the matter with him? He hardly ever consults me now, and I used to be his right hand. What can it mean?"

Tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"I don't know, Hua," I replied soothingly. "I suppose I am stronger and more active than you, and he fancies me more useful."

"No more?" said the little girl, planting herself resolutely opposite me, and looking straight into my eyes. "Do you mean to say, Lisa, you believe it is no more?"

"I think not—I hope not," I answered, with a slight hesitation in my voice.

"You *know* he has!" she burst out vehemently. "Don't prevaricate; it is wicked. You *know* he is in love with you. I have seen it. You have stolen his heart away from me, and you are a bad, deceitful woman!"

I had at that time neither the age nor the experience to enable me to cope judiciously with this attack, and I confess I answered poor Hua's charge rudely and foolishly. I told her I did not recognize her right to speak to me in this way, and that if Mr. Victor chose to turn his affections towards me, it was not my fault, and I would not be called to account by her for it. And then I told her to leave the room. Away she went in a passion of tears to her own room, and, flushed with indignation, I went back with my small bag to the kitchen, where Mrs. Atwood, with a smile on her face, was calmly giving Mr. Victor some instructions about disinfectants.

As I entered the kitchen from within, Algy Atwood, stamping the snow off his feet, came in at the door. His face grew glum when he saw Victor Massey, but he held out his hand and greeted him.

“What’s all this?” he said to me, staring at my dress, which was of the plainest and simplest, and at the bag I held in my hand.

“Mrs. Trotter is ill of small-pox,” said Mrs. Atwood, “and Mrs. Bellamy is good enough to offer to go and nurse her.”

“Nurse a case of small-pox!” cried Algy, in a trembling voice. “Good God, Lisa” (he had never called me so before, and I saw both his mother and the collegian give a start), “who has put you up to such madness?”

“Madness?” cried Victor, with a voice of more power than I had ever heard him use. “It is duty.”

“Duty be d—d,” cried Algy, bursting out.

His mother uttered a little scream, and Victor turned up his eyes and lifted his black gloves in an attitude of pious horror.

“Don’t go on with your hypocritical cant, Victor,” Algy proceeded, unable to restrain himself. “What right have you to ask Mrs. Bellamy, a young, beautiful, delicate woman to go and run the risk of getting an awful disease and ruining her face for ever? What are you driving at, eh? It is time that we should understand each other.” I had never heard him so eloquent, and there was a strange thrill in his voice.

“Algy! Algy!” cried his mother, in a deep, sorrowful tone. “Have you no regard for your mother’s feelings, for simple decency, for Christian forbearance. Forgive him, Victor.”

“I do,” said Victor, with a calm, pitying expression, under which there lurked nevertheless a deadly coldness of tone. “I do, my dear Mrs. Atwood.”

“Ha! ha!” laughed Algy. “*Forgive*

me, you say? I don't want your forgiveness. I see through you clear as daylight, Victor Massey."

Victor rose and looked at him firmly. I had never seen him so calm and dignified.

"I don't know what there is to see, Mr. Algernon Atwood. You are excited. I am afraid there is only one explanation of it."

"No, *Mister* Victor, I am not drunk, I can assure you. I know what I am doing, and I mean what I am saying. It is an infamous shame to trap this young lady into this work. It is not her duty, and you have a motive. I have watched you, sir! Why doesn't your sister go?"

"And you would like that?" inquired Victor. "Would you expose her to a danger you fear for some one else?"

Master Algy bit his lip. He was

caught ; for certainly before my arrival his manner and attention to Caroline Massey had justified her and her friends in thinking that he was fond of her.

“ I am not clever enough to bandy words with you, Victor Massey, but I know this is wrong. This lady is in our care.”

“ *Our* care ! ” cried Mrs. Atwood. “ In *my* care, yes, but not in yours, my son.”

Here I spoke up.

“ Mr. Algy,” I said, “ I am infinitely obliged to you for your kindness, and I know it comes of a good heart. But I am here in no one’s care ; I must do what I think best, and it is my own proposal to go and nurse this poor woman. We ought to be going.”

“ Go, and God bless and preserve you ! ” said Mrs. Atwood. “ We shall hear from you daily, I trust.”

“ Oh ! you’ll do that,” said Algy, who

had suddenly bloomed out into a determined and assertive man. "Give me the bag, Mrs. Bellamy. I'll carry it for you; I'm afraid Victor would find it too heavy." And with this he flung out of the door.

Victor looked very white as he followed, but he said nothing as we walked along towards the poor woman's house. Algy, swinging the bag, took the middle of the road, as if to keep as far away as possible from Victor, occasionally holloaing a remark to me. So we arrived at the door.

Algy stopped. Victor opened the door and went in. He took no further notice of Algy.

"Good-bye, Mrs. Bellamy," said the latter, taking my hand into his great fist, after drawing off his fur mitten. "You are a brave lady, and may my mother's

prayer come true and God preserve you. Every day at ten o'clock in the morning and five in the afternoon I will be just here to know how you are. You will look out when I tap on the window. It will please my mother and sister, you know."

Algy's fiction was transparent, but I liked him none the less, though I knew the poor fellow was wasting his sentiment on unhappy me. I seemed to be destined to carry sorrow and distraction wherever I went.

I found I had undertaken a serious business. The case was a bad one; the rooms were small and stifling; but I felt possessed by a good spirit that prompted me to the duty and sustained me while I discharged it. Victor Massey came as often as he could, and relieved me a few hours every day, to enable me to take some rest. He seemed to me to grow

more ghastly every time, and if there had been any sentiment in his choice of me for this work, both on his part and on mine it vanished before the awful realities of the disease. But I worked on cheerfully, and never was I more happy at heart than in my attendance at this poor woman's bedside. Our efforts were rewarded. At the end of three weeks the doctor pronounced her in a fair way of recovery, and begged me earnestly to go home. I was indeed pale and thin, but I never suffered any evil consequences from this my first great sacrifice.

Every day Algy had come as he promised, always bringing me some little dainty, and always saying a few cheering words. I positively got to like to see his plain, honest face, and his blue eyes.

But Algy had got into sad disgrace. Miss Massey would not speak to him, and

there was a general coolness between the families ; and as it was only too clear that I was the unhappy cause of the disturbance, I came in for a fair share of cold wind from both sides—Algy and Victor, however, vying with each other to show which should be kinder to me.

This state of things could hardly have lasted long, and I must by force of circumstances have been obliged to change my home, when I had once more to find how strangely the religion of Christ is interpreted and presented by His modern disciples. Perhaps this is not to be wondered at, since those who were with Him so imperfectly understood Him.

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTIAN CHARITY

MR. MASSEY had been to New York to attend a meeting of the clergy who propagated ritualism. I have no proof of it, but I cannot doubt that Mrs. Massey and her daughter prompted him to make some inquiries about me. Miss Vander-teufel was so well known and respected among them, that they had never thought of seeking any information beyond her statement, but now probably the edge of curiosity was whetted by a desire to get me out of the way. One day soon after his return Mr. Massey called upon me.

He asked to see me alone. His manner was chilling and strange. His face was grave. He spoke with averted eyes.

“May I speak to you, madam,” he began, “on a serious matter that has come to my knowledge in New York?”

“Oh, certainly, Mr. Massey. Will you be seated?” I knew what was coming.

“When you came here, my dear madam, introduced by so dear and trusted a friend of my worthy brother Ridley in New York as Miss Vanderteufel, professedly to retire from the world and recover from a great sorrow, you naturally awakened in my own heart, and that of Mrs. Massey and my daughter, a deep sympathy and compassion. The nature of the sorrow which had befallen you was not indicated to us, but your appearance, your manner, showed that you had gone through some terrible

trial, and our hearts were drawn out to you ; moreover, your conduct has been exemplary : we felt that we had in you a sister in the Lord, one who shared our convictions, who was anxious to follow with us the way of holiness. Your intercourse with my wife and daughter and son has been perfectly unrestrained—hem ! ”

“ Mr. Massey,” I said, “ I shall never forget how kind you have all been. Some of the happiest and best days of my life have been spent here.”

“ Yes—hem—hem—we, too, valued the—hem—hem—agreeable intercourse we have had with you, madam, and have highly appreciated the help you have from time to time given us in our blessed work. The Lord reward you, madam—the Lord reward you, I say ; I pray that He may.”

He took out his pocket-handkerchief

and wiped his face, which was perspiring. He had undertaken a task that was against the grain. His natural kindness and gentleness of heart recoiled from the necessity imposed upon him by a sense of religious and social duty.

I said nothing to assist him. I was very much hurt by the coldness and severity of his manner—a coldness and severity so unusual with him.

“My dear madam,” he at length said, “in New York I became acquainted with the facts of your history——”

“What!” I said. “Was it necessary for you, Mr. Massey, to make inquiries about me after Miss Vanderteufel had vouched for me?”

“Hem! Hem! Well, you see, Mrs.—Mrs.—ah!—Toddles, I believe?—yes. Miss Vanderteufel is a very estimable young lady, but I fear her kindness some-

times runs away with her judgment. Naturally, when my—my family became intimate with you, it was very unsatisfactory not to know anything more of you than that your name was Bellamy, and that you were suffering from the result of a great misfortune. In my position—in my wife's position—we owed a duty to our church and our small but select circle of friends in regard to those who associate with us. You see—you will understand that the life you have led—your reputation——”

“In fine, you mean to say, sir, that having discovered that I am Mrs. Ben Toddles, wife of a clown now in Sing Sing, by profession a trapezist, you no longer deem me fit to associate with the wife and daughter of a clergyman who preaches forgiveness of sins and the blessings of repentance?”

“Hem! Hem! Madam, you are putting it—are you not?—rather—rather, a little—too strongly. It is not exactly that. There are proprieties, you know.”

“For a Christian minister?” I burst out. “If I am penitent, and have been living, as I thank God I have been living, in Figtown, a blameless life, do you treat me as an outcast even if all is true the world says of me?”

He looked a little touched.

“Alas! madam,” he said, “it is the penalty of sin, which falls alike upon the guilty and the innocent, and cleaves to the sinner long after the sin is forgiven.”

“And it is a *good* God who inflicts this? And it is your Christian duty to be the instrument of punishment? Oh, Mr. Massey, I will have done with your wretched religion if this is really what you mean. I give it up from this mo-

ment, with all its shams and deceptions and lies. The poor sinner in the Temple was sent away with a kind word and a bit of hope——”

“I speak kindly—I would have you carry away a blessing—I entreat you, madam, do not misunderstand—what I am doing is due to the reputation of my sacred office, to the welfare of my wife and my family. I assure you I will come to you with the offices of religion whenever you desire, encourage you in your difficult path, be your friend in the truest sense—but——”

“But—not a friend who respects me ; a friend who believes in me ; you will be a friend who pities me—a man who comes to me ‘with offices of religion,’ as a doctor goes with medicine to his patient, and runs away again as soon as he has administered the dose, for

fear he should catch a contagion? Your wife and daughters will refuse to associate with me, perhaps even to touch my hands or to bow to me. They certainly won't kiss me. I am too bad to help your son nurse a sick woman, or read the Bible to a dying pauper! I don't want your 'offices,' your 'friendship.' I will go back to the life you drive me to."

"Don't speak like that! Don't throw away the blessings of repentance and tempt the Spirit——"

"Mr. Massey," I said, getting up, drawing myself to my full height, and speaking with a warmth that seemed to alarm him, "don't you, sir, sit there and talk humbug. 'Divine mercy' on your terms is not worth having——"

He rose and lifted both his hands.

"Blasphemy! You are indeed in the bonds of iniquity. This proves how cor-

rect Mrs. Massey's judgment was. There can have been no real conversion—no real turning from the wallowing in the mire. May God help you, my poor young woman! I deeply pity you. I will never cease to pray for you—but I cannot stay to hear such profanity." And taking up his hat he went out hurriedly.

Now, an older and, I trust, a wiser woman, looking back on that scene, I can see how differently it might have gone on and ended. He was probably sincere; he was anxious about his son, whose liking for me was too evident, and he was pained by the duty which social proprieties and conventional religion seemed to impose upon him.

A touching word—a gentler spirit—might have melted him. But the word was not spoken. My rude nature was

aroused. He left me—and convinced that in a few days my real name and history would be known in every family in Figtown, I resolved to go away from the place.

In twenty-four hours I was in New York. A week afterwards I was on my way to Europe, aided by Eva Vanderteu-fel's generosity, and followed by her good wishes and her prayers. Yes! followed by them, I am persuaded, through the turbid and guilty life into which I plunged. I never saw her again, but her face, her form, her gentle voice, were often with me, and now I love to dream—it may be but a dream, yet 'tis a fair one—that perhaps from there where she, transfigured, enjoys the bliss of the well-doing, she knows me changed and purified, and numbers me among those of whom her Master's voice has said to her—“*Ye have done it unto Me.*”

CHAPTER XIII

MONSIEUR PARABOLE

ON my arrival in London, I put myself in communication with a Monsieur Parabole, one of those *entrepreneurs* for the stage and music-halls, who, since public amusements have so largely developed, have brought the system of purveying them to a system. Mr. Boganio was more of a financier; Monsieur Parabole was a tradesman. He manufactured or he bought, and traded in "stars." He was a keen, active man, of a sanguine temperament and a lively temper. He embodied in himself all the strength,

nerve, and activity of a gymnast, a ballet-dancer, a rope-walker, and a clown. He spoke rapidly and with decision. His eye was restless and bright ; his gestures were quick and energetic. He was born in Jamaica, transplanted when young to the State of New York, studied for the bar—I don't mean at first the trapeze bar—found out that he was not fitted for that profession, and tried a year at medicine. Converted at a revival, he had made up his mind for six months to be a minister ; but, finding that religion and preaching were not suited to his genius, he abandoned the idea and took to the Stock Exchange, where he distinguished himself by a brilliantly audacious career, which ended in bankruptcy and two cents in the dollar. He at length found his *métier*, and I always admired him for his perseverance in seeking it. A strongly

built man, of tremendous nerve, he took naturally to exercises, and at the gymnasium discovered that he could surpass all competitors. When, therefore, he was thrown on the world without anything but his tarnished character, he adopted the profession of gymnast—a very fair and a very honest one for many a clever and good fellow. So greatly were his efforts appreciated that in a few years, while still a young man, he had made a considerable sum of money. Thereupon he came out of his shell: undertook to “run a star,” made all her engagements, bullied her employers, thrashed a Viennese Jew, who kept a music-hall, for failing in a contract with her, escaped the clutches of the Austrian law by one of those happy flukes which only occur to adventurous Englishmen, and from that time on became a favourite

with the lady *artistes*, who knew he would gallantly and honourably stick to his bargains and defend their rights. Why or how this gentleman took the name of Parabole I cannot say. His real name was Brown. He was the most wonderful fellow for inventing "novelties." His eye for a girl who would make a good gymnast or ballet-dancer was keen, and his judgment infallible. As he walked along the street or in the park, he could not help running his quick glance over every figure, and estimating the exact gymnastic or artistic value of it—in dollars, always in American dollars. If he were very sharp with people with whom he had to do business, he was kind and generous to his staff—or perhaps one might better call it his *clientèle*—who would be performing in places so distant from one another as Hamburg or Vienna,

or London or Madrid. When any particular performer made a great hit, and was in much demand, he made duplicates or even triplicates of her; and thus the celebrated Soso might appear to have been performing on the same night at Liverpool, at Brighton, and at the Circus Renz in Berlin.

Monsieur Parabole's office was in a by-street in the Haymarket. I came to know him through a young actress, Louise Bilton, who crossed over in the same steamer with me, and showed me a great deal of kindness.

She had letters to Monsieur Parabole, who no sooner saw her than he offered her an engagement, not as an actress, but in the *corps de ballet*, and a year after she carried off to the altar a London merchant with a very fair fortune. He was a half Spaniard, half Englishman,

named d'Azieta, lived in a handsome house at Wimbledon, and kept a pair of horses. Louise, who was the daughter of a Boston Unitarian minister, and a girl of culture, made him an admirable wife. They afterwards were very kind to me. Monsieur Parabole, talking always, in spite of his name, with a fine Yankee twang, used to cite this case to his young ladies in order to show the superior advantages of his system.

“Any other duffer she'd 'a gone to, would 'a made her what she wanted to be—an actress—third-class, parliamentary—low fares. Now, the very minute I saw that girl walk into my room, I saw that she had been made for tights and foot-lights, and would fill a whole house with her figure alone. Being a Yankee girl she had the sense to agree with me, and we fixed it off in about ten minutes.

Well, there she is—splendid house, champagne every day, two children, horses—regular swell and no mistake, all through coming to a man who knew just what she was made for, and her true value in the market.”

Here he would slap his chest, which sounded like a drum, and pick an inconvenient morsel out of his teeth with his penknife, or, if he were at dinner, with his fork.

When I was presented to Monsieur Parabole his eye ran over me like lightning. I had vastly improved in my country retirement. My face and form had matured, I looked fresh and blooming, and as I still paid great attention to my dress, and was habited on this day in dark, almost mourning colours, which suited me well, my appearance could not have been displeasing. Indeed, as I

lifted my veil to pay the cabman outside the door of Monsieur Parabole's office, a gentleman, blond, tall, dressed in the faultless style of English "high life," stopped and looked at me an instant, and then recollecting himself, passed on with a glance at Parabole's door.

I entered. Mr. Parabole turned round sharply. I gave him Louise's letter. He tore it open, and almost instantly threw it down again.

"Miss Lena? Ah! I've heard about you. You are very clever—can do anything. Not afraid of anything—eh? Out of training, though—too fat. Well, I guess we can soon take that down. Take a seat—take a seat. I'll engage *you* on the view." (*Writing.*) "'Trapeze-bar'—any tight-rope? No—all right—just as well. I can teach you some new tricks on the bar. Plunging?"

“I have never learned to swim in my life.”

“Ha ! ha ! you don’t understand. It is a new invention, of my own. Can you fall well ? ”

“I can turn a double somersault in the air and fall on my feet.”

“Oh ! that’s nothing—any baby could do that. Could you turn two somersaults in sixty feet, diving head first into a net ? ”

“I guess not.”

“Pardon me. I guess you *can*, when I show you how. Easy as rocking in a cradle. Not the slightest danger in it. I’ve a girl who can do sixty feet without winking. Are your teeth strong ? Let me see your jaw.”

He examined my mouth like a dentist or a horse-dealer.

“You have done that trick already, I think ? ”

“I can easily hold three hundred pounds.”

“That ain’t necessary. We don’t want to show off a three hundred pounder at sixty feet above ground in a woman’s mouth. Public, clergy, members of Parliament, magistrates, wouldn’t stand it, you know—not with a girl. Well, now, when will you be ready to go into training? At once? All right. I’ll have an apparatus rigged up ready to-morrow; Tiggs’s Gymnasium, St. Martin’s Lane—all alone, you know. Put on your costume.—Hallo, my lord!—honour. A long time since I have seen you.”

The door had opened, and the gentleman who had passed me in the street walked in. His air was cool and easy.

“Ah!” he said, glancing at me, “I beg pawdon—intewupting a *tête-à-tête*

which I am suaw cannot be othawwise than agweeable."

He bowed to me. I returned the salutation.

"Pwesent me to your fwriend," he said, cavalierly. "Anothaw new staw?"

Monsieur Parabole bit his lip; but, without rising, he said—

"Lord Timbleton—Miss Lisa Lena, a wonderful trapeze *artiste*, my lord."

The gentleman bowed again and offered me his hand. I was surprised by his ease and coolness.

"Aw you an Amewican, Miss Lena? I needn't ask. Youaw face tells its own stowy. All the pwetty women come from Amewica."

I blushed, and coldly inclined my head.

"Gently, my lord, gently; draw it mild. Miss Lisa is a new arrival here."

"But not afwaid of compliments, I

hope," said the noble lord, taking a chair near me and nursing his knee, while he stuck an eye-glass up. "Delighted to make youaw acquaintance. Hope we shall be fwiends. I'm fwiendly to all awt and awtistes—eh, Pawabola? Pawabola, you know, Miss Lisa—a cwoked sawt of customaw—sawt of conic section, you know—not to be twusted."

"That's the fiftieth time I've heard you make that joke, my lord, and I never yet saw where the joke was."

"Eh? Well, you know—what? wheaw the joke is? Well! 'pon my honaw, I don't exactly know wheaw it is myself. Nevaw mind. Aw you going to exhibit Miss Lena in London?"

"Yes, I hope so."

"Well, I pwomise you you shall have a bumpaw house."

His lordship stayed an hour, spite of Parabole's impatience.

The next day, after having seen my performances, Parabole concluded an arrangement with me, which was a very fair and even handsome one. I engaged to go anywhere on the continent where he made arrangements for me.

“I shall make three thousand out of you the first year,” he said to me, “so I guess I can afford to be generous.”

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CHAPTER XIV

MAD LIFE

HERE I draw a veil. There are years in many a life which it is better never to look back upon, never to recall. If there be a divine mercy, and it has been sought and found, I have often wondered why many good people continue to carry about a coffin-full of old sins, unburied, mouldering, to be sorrowed over afresh each day. It is the teaching of some schools of religion that this morbid funeral of woe is an ordinance and a necessity, a penance one is bound to inflict on oneself, for one's evil past. Were this true, the atonement they preach must have been im-

perfect, and their system of religion would fall down like a pack of cards.

However true or not, there can be no excuse for partaking these sorrowful memories with an indiscriminate public. If I have allowed myself, when I felt, with my matured and better instructed judgment, that there were matters that ought to be known and hinted at, to speak now and then with some frankness, I have been careful at every step to avoid the outrageous so-called "realism" —which teaches morality by pictures of indecency.

I pass over three years, during which I had made what, in my line, was a brilliant success. In London and Paris, in Madrid, Vienna, St. Petersburg, or Berlin, in Budapest or Boulogne, my photographs, in various costumes and poses, adorned the windows of the shops along-

side of crown princes and princesses, duchesses, countesses, baronesses, the most illustrious men of science, the prettiest ballet-girls, the wives of men of society, distinguished philosophers, moralists, and divines. Statuesque figures, in one of my most celebrated positions, were sold in clay and parian, and the walls of every great city used to afford the public a vulgar means of familiarizing themselves with my figure and appearance.

My rooms wherever I went were redolent with flowers. Noblemen, millionaires, artists, and literary men visited me, fêted me, banqueted me.

And yet I was an outcast. I could enter no good society, be seen with no respectable person. I must receive my male and female friends in private rooms, dine and sup with them in closed cabinets.

Not one of them would be seen with me at the races, where I might sit in my box alone without being recognized by intimates who were walking around me; or perhaps I was accompanied by some rich tradesman who wanted to ape the manners of "high life," and was proud to be seen in the company of a notorious woman.

In such an existence there is never a moment or an hour of happiness, though there may be many of delirium, which is the nearest approach to happiness when hope and dignity are lost. To forget; to live from day to day; to crush down and root out any springing good wish; never to look the future in the face; these are the negative blessings of such a condition. It is morally a sheet of blank paper, physically a mere vibration of life and passion, intellectu-

ally an inanity. Yet you might take a thousand women out of such a life and they would pant to get back to it. The physical nature which has been outraged and wronged almost always ceases to be a possible cabinet of a *human* mind and heart. It is the casket of a monster—an inhumanity. Happily, so fine was my physical organization, that a few years did not suffice to make it wholly thus for me.

Eva Vanderteufel was dead. One of her last acts was to write a touching, sorrowful letter to me. My name was notorious ; but she never gave me up.

“ Lisa Lena ”—she said—“ for the sake of him that is gone—who, with all his sins upon him, at last repented—I hope for you—I pray for you. . . . ”

I can transcribe no more. . . . Many of these precious words are blotted out long ago by bitter tears. . . .

I had taken an engagement at Vienna for the season of the Exhibition.

That wonderful and beautiful city, to me the finest in the world, with its quaint and splendid antiquity, its magnificent modern improvements, its superb palaces and streets, its lively and busy crowds, its pleasure-seeking men, and pretty women,—is a mine of wealth to *artistes* of my class. Gardens and pavilions and kiosks in summer, music-halls in winter, music, dancing, eating and drinking, abound in every quarter from Leopoldstadt to Meidling, or Waring to the Prater.

I inhabited the best hotel *au premier*. I was receiving seven hundred florins a week. I kept a maid; and the acrobat who assisted in my performances was at once a protector and a man of business.

I became intimate with a Count

Flischi, a middle-aged man, of very quiet manners and a large fortune.

There was a curious mixture of gallantry and good feeling in this gentleman. He was polished and kind and generous ; with qualities which would have made him a true and noble family man. His life had been blighted by an early disappointment, and he had not the strength of mind to recover from its effects. He was exceedingly well-educated, and knew well several languages. During the year I spent at Vienna he taught me German and perfected me in French. He gave me books to read in both languages, singularly enough, selected, for their wit or their good tone—and free from the disfiguring taints of many Parisian novels. I had a music teacher, and began to appreciate some of those beauties in the greater masters of the

art which used to enchant his cultivated mind. All this only served to accentuate to me the sorry disabilities of my situation. It hardly distracted me from them. The more the mind developed, and the consciousness was awakened within me that I had been and was capable of a better life, the more terrible and impossible seemed the great gulf that was fixed between me and all bright and virtuous society. I could only find reprieve to my painful thoughts by plunging deeper into amusement—such amusement as was open to an outcast!

Count Flischi's relations with me, however, were not destined to proceed as smoothly as his former intrigues. His last fancy had been a woman who, no one knew why or when, had taken the title of the Countess Borennye. It was intended to be a Hungarian title, and

there are so many Hungarian and Austrian counts and countesses, barons and baronesses, that few people cared to take the trouble to inquire into the authenticity of the coronet which she shamelessly paraded in the circles of the *demi-monde*. She was pretty, with a fair, fine-cut face, a graceful and even noble figure, small feet and hands, a mass of brown hair upon the head of a Diana, carried with marvellous grace and dignity. But her eye was cold as steel. Her lips were compressed together with a cruel and relentless firmness. Flischi, who never showed any affectation, introduced her to me. I remember the deadly glance she cast at me. It sent a shudder through my whole body. But she instantly became charming, caressing, affectionate.

“You will come and see me often,” she

said, laughing—a metallic, false laugh, I thought. “We ought to be friends, having a common interest in my friend here.”

She glanced at the count with a momentary flash of the eye, and he became a little confused.

“I think,” he said coolly, jumping over a wide gap of intermediate thought in an instant, “that you have fairly consoled yourself. How is Dolgorouky?”

“Ah, *coquin*! you are laughing at me. Well, it is also true, you have had your day.”

“Like every other dog, eh?” he replied, carelessly.

“Precisely. You are quite yourself to-day!”

“I have an engagement,” cried the count, looking at his watch.

“At least,” she replied, “you will let

me give you a seat. My carriage is waiting. I should like to speak to you for five minutes."

They had both risen, and they looked at each other with a peculiar expression; she with a determined eye and face, and he with some hesitation.

"You will come," she said deliberately.

"Very well," he said. "I can only spare half an hour. I——"

"Is it Bibiche or Kranz?" she said, smiling. "They can either of them wait for me.—Good-bye, Miss Lisa; we are friends. Give me your arm, count."

They went away.

At five o'clock the count and I always dined together. That day he came in a few minutes before dinner-time. His dress was in perfect order, and his manner as easy and cool as usual, but the moment I saw his face, which was

pale, I saw that something had happened.

“Why, what is the matter with you? Are you ill?”

“No, but it is a wonder I am here. That little devil who took me away—what think you she has done? She drives me in her carriage to her rooms in the Gisela Strasse. She invites me to mount the stairs to receive back some article she ought to restore to me. I go. I enter her salon—a little boudoir—within is her *chambre-à-coucher*. She presses me to take a seat. She puts her two hands, with the gloves taken off, one on either cheek. She glances me in the eyes, hard and killing.

“‘You have left me, Flischi,’ she says. ‘You have abandoned me for that *Americaine*—a lump only—*sans esprit*—tedious—terrible. What will you?’

“To this I say—

“ ‘Nothing I will. You possess already other friends.’

“ ‘And you never return?’

“ ‘My dear Borenniyey,’ I say, ‘be reasonable. These are affairs of every day. Love is always a human algebra—the veritable system of permutations and combinations.’

“Her eyes become very bright and wicked.

“ ‘You laugh at me,’ she say. ‘Well, I fetch you something, and then you may go. *Canaille!*’

“This she say with a great emotion, and run into her *chambre*. I was out there, waiting and surprised, when she come out of the room without her mantle and *chapeau*, and both hands behind her back. Her face was terribly angry. I say in German—

“ ‘What make you?’

“ ‘That!’

“ Then quickly she has directed at my head a revolver, pulled the trigger and fired. The ball goes under my ear, so! I cry out—

“ ‘*Mein Gott!*’

“ But again she pull, and the ball go through my hair, so! Then I cast myself at her and catch her hand and pull away the revolver. I say—

“ ‘Do you aim to kill me?’

“ She say, ‘Yes,’ and look like a devil.

“ I put the pistol in my pocket. Here you see it—two chambers empty. Ah! never was I so near to die. Then come a *foule* of people, who were asking what was that detonation of pistols. In the wall were two small holes. I bow to them all and show the revolver, and say it was an accident, that it went off while

I examined the young lady's revolver. So they all go away, and I too. I would never see her again ; but what will you ? Lisa, you also must take care, for this woman is without a conscience. She is a devil, I tell you."

Count Flischi, whose narration, as he told it, had brought the beads out on his brow, wiped them away, and pouring out a glass of champagne tossed it off.

It was certainly an alarming thing to have come across a character so desperate ; but that very evening, when I came out after the performance to take a little supper with Flischi in a private box, Borennnyey, who was in another box with the estimable Prince ——, ran in to see us, kissed me affectionately, and tapping the count with her fan on the shoulder, said—

" Didn't I frighten you to-day ? "

“No,” he said; “but you play a dangerous game. The next time I will kill you.” I saw his eye flash as he said it, and she turned pale an instant.

“Ah!” she cried, laughing, as she was running away. “Next time I shall not miss.”

Nothing more was said about this affair, and we saw a good deal of each other, but I felt persuaded that the “countess” had not yet forgiven Flischi.

She had now got hold of a very young fellow, a Count Tedesco, who loved her to distraction. I believe he even made her an offer of marriage. Whatever quality it was that recommended her, she had the power of bewitching men beyond any other woman I ever knew. One officer had blown out the top of his head—I do not say his brains—for her; another had thrown himself off the

Northern Railway bridge into the Danube. When she was told of the former, who had spent a great deal of money on her, she lit a cigarette, and said—

“He was always stupid; this is the only wise thing he ever did.”

One Sunday Count Flischi proposed to me to go out to Baden, the well-known bathing-place near Vienna, and take dinner there in the afternoon. We drove out to this charming spot with its vine-clad hills, its chestnut groves, its pretty gardens, its streets enlivened by the brilliantly dressed people of the city. In the garden of the “Grünen Baum” we sat down to dinner in a little kiosk. Parties were dining around us under the trees, taking their merriment in that lively yet gentle way which is characteristic of the polished Viennese. Count Flischi recognized several friends, and

went to speak to them. Presently he came back to me and said—

“*Borennnyey est la.*”

Looking in the direction indicated, I observed her with her young friend. We bowed, and I took no further notice. Coffee had arrived; the count had lit his cigar. We were enjoying the bright, lively scene around us, the air so genial, a light zephyr agitating the leaves with a slight rustle, the tables stretching away on all sides crowded with guests, here and there some handsomely dressed group offering to the eye a mass of brilliant colour, and the busy waiters gliding in and out among the throng. There was the murmur of conversation, light, musical laughing, tinkling of glasses, blue smoke curling up from a hundred mouths—a pretty and engaging scene, which one languidly enjoyed after

a tolerably good dinner and half a bottle of champagne. Suddenly the "comtesse" left the table where the young fool had been studying her eyes for two hours, and came over and seated herself in our tent. She seemed to be in lively humour; she rallied the count, and joked with me; indeed, for ten or fifteen minutes, during which she rattled on, giving us very little chance of speaking. She had placed her chair close to the count's, who was opposite to me. I noticed that her manner was openly and somewhat excessively affectionate to him. She tapped him with her fan, leaned over until her cheek almost touched his face, and laid a hand on his shoulder caressingly for a moment or two. Happening just then to look towards the table where her companion was sitting, I saw that his face was dark and angry, and

that he gave a furious glance at Count Flischi. I believe she saw it too, for she increased her familiarity, edging her chair nearer to the count, and once more placing her hand on his arm and letting it rest there. The count, who was a careless and good-natured fellow, did not care to risk her anger by shaking it off. He placed his own arm on the back of her chair, and in this position they certainly looked a very affectionate couple.

Suddenly Count Tedesco rose and strode swiftly up to our table. Flischi knew him well.

"*Pardon*, what are you doing there, Flischi?" cried Tedesco, in a voice of suppressed passion.

Flischi looked up calmly, with an air of surprise.

"Excuse me, Count Tedesco," he said,

“but are you conscious of the tone and manner in which you are addressing me?”

“Perfectly. I mean it,” replied the other, hotly. “You are treating that lady, who happens to have come here with me, with open familiarity.”

“I beg your pardon,” replied the Count Flischi with dignity. “The countess is an old friend of mine. I had not the least intention of doing anything offensive to you, but I cannot allow a young man like you to address me on any pretext in terms so rude.”

“I did it on purpose, sir. You have insulted me.”

“I have not—but I will,” cried Flischi, whose eye now grew dark and glowing, while he otherwise preserved his outward calm. “There!”

He took up his coffee-cup and dashed

the remains of his coffee in the other's face.

Tedesco seized a bottle to throw at the count's head, but his hand was caught by a gentleman at the next table, where they had been watching the quarrel.

"Pardon, M. le Comte," he said in perfect French; "but it seems to me that this is a quarrel which must be settled elsewhere."

"You are right, Vieuxtemps," said Flischi, looking up smilingly at the gentleman. "The count knows perfectly my address, and I am lucky in your appearance at such a juncture. I could have no better friend. You will do me the honour to act for me?"

The Frenchman, an *attaché* of the Embassy, took off his hat and bowed.

"With the greatest pleasure."

I looked at Borennnyey. She was radiant. Her cruel eye was upon my face, watching the emotions of terror and anxiety which I could not suppress. She followed the Count Tedesco, who was wiping his face at their table. She put her arm through his. He shook it off, called the waiter and paid him, and then slightly lifting his hat to her, he walked away. She bit her lip and looked round hardily on the people who were standing and sitting around her, all in a great state of excitement. They gave her no very favourable glances.

So far as young Tedesco was concerned, he had been cured of his liking for her. But it did not much matter. Early next morning a meeting took place on the banks of the Danube. The weapons were pistols. Both men were noted shots, though Flischi, as the older

and more experienced man, was the steadier of the two. They fired together. Both dropped. Tedesco's shot struck one of Flischi's ribs and glanced off, making a surface wound across the breast, his right side being turned to his antagonist. Flischi's shot went through the other's lung, and he died in a few hours. Before his death he acquitted Flischi of misconduct, and stated that Borennnyey had deliberately drawn him into the quarrel, by telling him before she left him at the table that she was again becoming a favourite of Flischi's. There could be no doubt that her intention was to excite the jealousy of the young man in order that he might revenge her upon the count.

She smoked another cigarette, and made another bad epigram on her late lover, and two days after I saw her at

my performance with a German *attaché*, laughing and enjoying herself as if nothing had happened. Her face was as beautiful, her manner as calm, her eyes as brilliant and as cruel as ever.

CHAPTER XV

A NEW FRIEND

ONE Sunday morning Count Flischi proposed to take me to hear the music of the mass at the Augustiner Kirche. Every visitor to Vienna knows this church, with its plain frontage on the Augustiner Strasse, its bald and ugly Gothic interior, its high, narrow windows along one side of the church, letting the glare of the Vienna sunlight through upon the white-washed walls without one mellowing pane of coloured glass to redeem the vast surface from its glaring baldness, or to create the dim, religious light which

mystic souls so love to worship in; its Canova monument to the Princess Christina, with those exquisite, chaste, graceful mourning figures carrying chaplets towards the dark door of the opened tomb, and the glorious figure of the angel on the right, who, sitting in an attitude of sorrowful *abandon*, watches the grief of the mortals with a sympathizing eye. There is the high altar in the chancel elevated on a platform and splendidly decorated, where the service is performed with all the gorgeous picturesqueness of the Catholic Church; and at the other end, in the nave, a choir gallery, hopelessly ugly, with a fine-toned organ; and here every Sunday morning, at eleven, some of the first opera-singers and musicians of Vienna sing and perform the service with an orchestral accompaniment.

Below, filling the old black carved seats, crowding in the aisles, is a vast and varied congregation, of every grade—from the fair, finely dressed countess to the simple but pretty shop-girl; officers and soldiers in uniform; young aristocrats come to look at the women; young women come to be looked at; old men in seedy garments; leathern-faced old females in their working dress; boys and girls of every grade, generally more solemn and touched than their seniors: a strange mingling of age and youth, of piety and wickedness, of ugliness and beauty.

Far up among the narrower arches of the distant chancel you hear the echo of the deep voice of the priest intoning the service, the smell of incense floats down between the lofty columns; the audience is still and hushed, except below the choir, where a slight rustle of movement

is heard as people gently come and go. The monotone suddenly ceases; with a crash the organ breaks forth, and the voices of the choir send back—as if from the clouds, back under the high-vaulted ceiling—a grand response.

Again! and again—until at length the duet between the altar and the choir ceases, and a single violin, played by a master-hand, utters a few fine, thrilling notes of prelude; and then, as the orchestra takes up the theme, suddenly there breaks forth a voice, clear, loud, piercing, joyous, and cherubic, that thrills the heart, and fills the whole place with a flood of melody.

Such a voice rang out from the music loft on that Sunday. Seated in the middle of the church in an attitude of devotion—my companion, by the way, following the mass with all the devout-

ness and gravity of an enthusiast—the very first note seemed to cut through my heart. I listened breathless. It was a voice from another sphere. There was in it such a harmony of daring and pathos. I shut my eyes and bowed my head. My whole being seemed exalted. I could not restrain the tears. It was as if I had heard for the first time the voice of a sister. I wept like a child.

Flischi noticed my emotion, but he said nothing until we got back to the hotel.

“What was the matter?” he said.

“Oh! that voice—that sweet girl’s voice. It went through me!”

“*C’est bien curieux!*” he said, musing.
“There is something in sympathy. You know not who it was?”

“No.”

“It was a *compatriote* of yours—Mees

Cora Day—a singer who has made a favourable *début* in Italy, and has a short engagement here, where she has been well received.”

“ I wish I could see her,” I cried.

“ Nothing is easier. She shall take supper with us after the Opera to-night. When will your performance be ended ? ”

“ Eleven o’clock.”

“ Good—at half-past eleven at Sacher’s—a private room upstairs. *Au revoir.*”

When I came back from the Prater in the evening I found Miss Cora sitting with the count in a private cabinet. He presented her. She had taken off her hat. She rose and shook hands. Her eyes were dark, deep, lustrous ; the hair superb in its fulness and blackness ; her face was a little haughty, but a sweetness lurked in the corner of her fine, rosy lips. It seemed to me as if I had seen her

somewhere before; the soft look of her eye and the touch of her hand thrilled me with a delightful sense of friendliness.

“It is pleasant to meet another American,” she said in a frank way. “I know several languages, but I love none like my own; and there is scarcely any one I can call a friend.”

“*You* could have as many friends as you like,” said the count, gallantly.

“Yes,” she replied, “of a sort—” And then she suddenly paused. She could not say to us what she would have liked to say. It struck me suddenly and sharply. I had never before felt my situation so painfully. Indeed, I could not restrain the tear that came to my eye.

Count Flischi was too great an adept in the ways of the world to be disconcerted, and he immediately led the conversation to her singing.

“Ah!” she said, “I am not what I was. I feel that I cannot sing as I wished to, and as I hoped I should. The Italian life did not suit me. The existence of an opera-singer in Italy is hideous to an American woman. One has to live in your armour. You find no chivalry behind the scenes.”

Flischi, who was a man of kindly and generous impulses, drew her out to speak of herself. She was a little sentimental, now and then *exaltée*, like some American girls, but her manner and conversation were altogether refined. I seemed to have come in contact with a new nature. I scarcely slept that night for thinking of Miss Cora. Something in her face, her manner, her talk, thrilled me with extraordinary interest. I went to see her next day. When we had chatted awhile, she suddenly took my hand and addressed me—

“Miss Lisa, I said something last night which perhaps pained you. I beg your pardon. I did not mean to do it. I talk fast and foolishly. I know, by too dreadful an experience, the difficulties in which girls in your position and mine are placed. Were I to tell you what I have gone through, you would wonder that I have been able in any way to retain my honour and self-respect. But I have done it,” she said, lifting her head, and drawing her lips tightly together, “almost at the risk of my life. I am obliged by my profession to be free, open to the addresses of a thousand intriguing villains. I am forced to be pleasant to them. I am often placed in questionable situations, but, thank God, I have been preserved from the worst evil—and yet—and yet, Lisa, I cannot judge others. I do not want to set myself above you.”

I could only press her hand in reply. My heart was too full then to speak. We remained together a couple of hours, and parted friends. This talk with her was like a cool draught of fresh water to my parched spirit.

Our intercourse continued for about two months. It was in October. My engagement in Vienna was nearly concluded. Cora, who had been suffering from cold and cough, had been advised to go to Mentone for the winter.

One morning, two days before her departure, I went into Cora's room. She was standing in her *robe-de-chambre*, her figure, in its attitude and grace, reminding me strangely of the old cherished picture of my mother, whom I had never ceased to long for and to seek.

She turned to me with a pale face and dilated eyes.

“ Look, Lisa ! ”

She pointed to the basin, where, in the clear water, I could see streaks of crimson. There was a fleck of crimson on her white chin.

“ What is it ? ”

“ Blood.” She pointed to her chest. “ Help me to a chair. I know now that I shall die.”

I took her to the chair and gently placed her on it. I wiped away the blood from the beautiful lips, and as I did so there welled up in my heart a strange, grand feeling, such as I had never felt before. Love—a sense of a pure and holy duty, of a sacrifice, a consecration, I might make of myself and my selfish life to ease this girl’s painful course down the dark and troubled river, was stirred within me.

She was lying back with her eyes shut.

She suddenly opened them and fastened them on me, their brilliancy increasing as she spoke.

“Lisa—I shall die *soon*—will you leave me ? ”

“Cora ! dear Cora ! ” I cried, throwing my arms round her neck, and weeping passionately. “Never ! never ! ”

“Thank God,” she said, “I have one friend. Come and sit here by my bed. There, let me look upon your face. There is something in it that comforts me—that reminds me of my mother. My poor mother ! She was a beautiful woman. She died young. I can only remember her face, and that she was often pale and sorrowful. She had some hidden grief. My father loved her to distraction. He would not let her out of his sight, and long after she died I never saw him. His mind was under a cloud. When I did see

him he was terribly changed. He had recovered his intelligence, only to die. I was then ten years old. One day he said to me, 'I did your mother a great wrong, but it is well you should never know it. I made her life sorrowful. She loved me so, and I was so selfish. I forced her to give up all she loved for me. I could not bear to think of her caring for or loving any one else. It was a crime. For your own happiness you must not know it.' That was all he ever said, and I have often racked my mind to think what this sorrow between them was."

She paused awhile ; the speaking hurt her. Her large, lustrous eyes continued to be fixed on me. By-and-by she spoke again.

"Lisa, may I talk to you freely ?"

"Yes, dear."

I half guessed what was coming.

“This Count Flischi. I wish you could see your way to give him up—to give it all up—all this life, which has no ending but sorrow and death . . . to be . . . Forgive me, dearest . . . I am paining you . . . Oh, Lisa, Lisa! for God’s sake, stop! You will kill me.”

I had sunk upon my knees by her bedside. My face was in my hands. I was sobbing violently, loudly. It was impossible to stay the torrent of sorrow which had burst upon me.

At length I grew calmer. Cora had been passing her soft white fingers over my hair and temples in a soothing caress. I lay with my head on her pillow, but I was silent, broken-hearted.

“Lisa,” she said, kissing me, “we will be sisters. It cannot be for long—it cannot be for long. See, I have a curious wish. Read me the story of Ruth. It is

pretty, and I love it. You will find a Bible over there."

I got up and went for the book. It was a common American edition. Between its leaves were a few silk-worked markers. I took it up in my hand and carelessly allowed the pages to fall over. My eye fell upon some writing on the fly-sheet. I read—

"CORAMANLEY."

My heart throbbed, a great sound came into my ears. I felt a dizziness of the brain. I ran to the bed where Cora lay watching me. I seized her two arms, and with starting eyes searched her features.

"Cora!" I cried. "Cora! Is your name not Day?"

"Not my real name."

"What was your father's name?"

"Manley."

"And your mother's?"

“ Mercer. She had been a widow. Her original name was Bellamy.”

“ They were married ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Oh ! my sister, my sister ! ”

I threw myself upon her bosom.

* * * * *

We had conversed long. Our hearts and life were open. Sunshine seemed to fill the room, and flood my soul. We kissed each other repeatedly.

“ Lisa,” said Cora at length, “ I have been thinking. Do you know what I suppose must have been our dear mother’s secret grief ? ”

“ Yes, I guess it now ; she wanted to recover us children.”

“ And he would not permit it. Poor father ! Poor mother ! If she could only see us now ! ”

EPILOGUE

THERE is a grave in the churchyard on the hill at Mentone, to which I make a long pilgrimage every year. On a simple marble slab are these words:—

CORA MANLEY,

AGED 20 YEARS AND 3 MONTHS.

*“ Thy people shall be my people,
And thy God my God.”*

ERECTED BY HER LOVING SISTER.

This is my shrine of love.

The rest of each year is lived for the quiet month I pass before this tomb. Of my small income, mostly spent in works of charity, one-fourth is consecrated to this pilgrimage, and to the

care and adornment of her grave. My time now is given to help some Protestant Nursing Sisters at a celebrated German watering-place. No one could recognize in the staid face and sober dress of my profession, the daring and restless acrobat of former days. I read, I think; I have improved myself. Refined women seek my society. They know nothing of my history. Only our motherly prioress holds its secret. I live under the name of my mother. The life is pacific, the passions are dead, the lost hopes have bloomed again, the vision of the eternal which had vanished has returned, clear now and gentle as a soft summer landscape in the quiet hills.

Kneeling by that tomb, with clasped hands and a peaceful heart, I can look out over the ancient-looking town, the pretty villas among the olives, the grand

outline of the Berceau towering up towards the blue sky with a gauzy veil of misty atmosphere, seeming to soften it into a cradle for angels, and there, below, the blue bay, the jutting point of Orengo, and lying out in the sunlit sea, glorious as the New Jerusalem, the palmy Bordigherra—every detail of the enchanting view that became so familiar to her eye, so dear to us both as the scene of a new vision, of a purified life—alas! so short, so sad. Often as I kneel, and pray, and look, I dream—and yet it is a dream of more than hope, for it is assurance—that I, the outcast, and Cora, the angel, may gaze together with loving eyes upon some scene even more glorious and perfect than this.

THE END.

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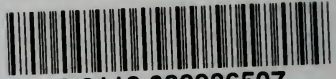
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